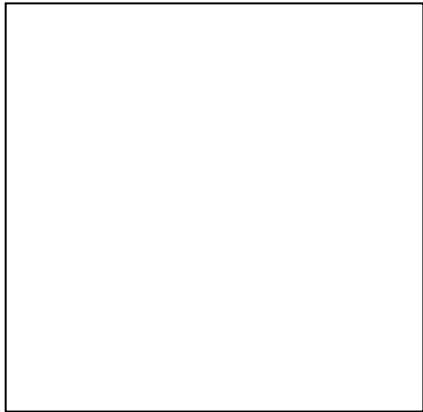


Postoperative Instructions

PARATHYROIDECTOMY



PARATHYROIDECTOMY

Wound Care:

Your wound will be covered with a dressing, which should be left in place for about 2 weeks. The dressing will be removed at your first postoperative visit. You may notice some dried blood under the dressing but that is of no concern. You can wash and shower with the dressing in place and even get it wet. Once removed, your surgeon will instruct you on care of your wound.

Activities:

You should generally restrict vigorous activities for 1 or 2 weeks after surgery. Activities, which involve turning the head suddenly, such as driving in heavy traffic, should be avoided. Commonsense is the best way to avoid straining your neck.

Local symptoms:

A variety of local symptoms are common for several weeks after surgery including tightness, swelling of the local area around the wound, choking, or having to force down food. Headaches and tiredness are also common as is weakness of the voice with prolonged use. Occasionally a symptom may last for months. Swelling of the neck around the wound is also common and may benefit from daily massage with Vitamin E cream. Numbness of the skin above the wound may be present and may last for many months.

Late complications:

The only delayed complication of concern is wound infection. This may have occurred if the wound becomes very red, hot and more swollen. If that occurs you must seek attention from your local doctor straight away who will arrange for you to have antibiotics.

Follow-up:

Generally your follow-up will consist of

- A visit at 1-2 weeks to check your wound and monitor your recovery. Your appointment should be made before you leave hospital.
- A final surgical check up at 2-3 months

In addition, you may need to see your endocrinologist for further follow up.

Country patients:

If you are unable to return to Melbourne for follow-up, it may be possible for the dressing to be checked and for your follow-up to be undertaken by your local doctor. We would need to confirm these arrangements before you leave hospital.

Calcium supplements:

Your calcium levels will drop after successful parathyroidectomy. Occasionally you may develop symptoms of numbness and tingling in the fingers, toes and lips. Very occasionally more severe cramping (tetany) may occur. If symptoms develop then these can be alleviated by taking calcium supplements (Caltrate) and/or a glass of milk. Caltrate can be obtained over the counter from your chemist. Take 1-2 tablets morning and night to alleviate symptoms. Please contact your local doctor and obtain a calcium test prior to your next review.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact your surgeon as listed overleaf.