

Denver Center for Endocrine Surgery

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Instructions after Thyroid/Parathyroid Surgery

WOUND CARE AND ACTIVITY

- If you have Steri-Strips (tape strips) or Dermabond (clear glue), these should stay ON until they fall off (2 weeks).
- You may shower with soap and water. DO NOT SOAK IN A TUB. Pat the wound dry.
- Do not use any ointments unless instructed by your surgeon.
- Avoid heavy lifting (>20 pounds) and sports until cleared by your surgeon.
- You may return to work when cleared by your surgeon.
- You may drive when you are no longer taking pain pills and feel safe turning your neck.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

- Prescription pain medications should be taken as prescribed.
- Ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) or naproxen (Aleve) may also be taken as directed.
- DO NOT DRIVE while using prescription pain medication.
- DO NOT DRIVE OR MAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS for 24 hours after anesthesia or while taking prescription pain medications.

DIET AND CONSTIPATION

- You will have a sore throat after surgery and may not feel like eating much. If you have a cough or mucus drainage you may take cough medications such as Mucinex/guaifenesin, or throat lozenges.
- There are no diet restrictions.
- Constipation is very common with the use of pain medications and calcium. To avoid constipation, drink plenty of water (8 – 10 glasses per day).
- If needed, you can take a stool softener or mild laxative (e.g., Milk of Magnesia or Miralax) once or twice per day with a glass of hot liquid (tea, coffee, etc.).

CALCIUM MANAGEMENT - ****IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU TAKE ANY CALCIUM SUPPLEMENTS OR ADDITIONAL MEDICATIONS EXACTLY AS PRESCRIBED****

- You may be prescribed calcium supplements or additional medications for calcium balance (Calcitriol, PhosLo/Acetate, HCTZ, or others). Check your discharge medication list. Ask your nurse or doctor if you have any questions.
- **If you take a thyroid hormone pill (Synthroid or similar):** Take it 1 hour before or 4 hours after calcium or food for proper absorption.
- Contact your doctor to arrange additional labs or appointments (if needed):

Next lab tests: _____

Next appointment: _____

WHEN TO CALL THE SURGEON'S OFFICE:

- Fever higher than 101 degrees.
- Redness or drainage of pus or bad-smelling liquid from the wound.
- Low calcium symptoms that do not improve after 2 extra doses of calcium.
- Trouble passing urine (unable to "go", pain, or burning).
- **Excessive neck swelling or trouble breathing – CALL 911.**