



POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THYROID AND PARATHYROID SURGERIES

The parathyroid glands are very sensitive and may take time to recover from the stress of surgery (*both thyroid and parathyroid surgery*). Since they balance calcium levels in the body, it is not uncommon for the body calcium levels to drop afterwards.

You will be taking extra calcium (Tums) 750mg tablets after surgery (unless you just have half of your thyroid removed, where you will not need extra):

SUBJECT POST OP

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- once every 8 hours for the first 5 days
- then once every 12 hours for the next 5 days
- then once a day for the final 5 days after surgery

Along with the calcium/Tums, you will get a prescription for Calcitriol (a form of vitamin D) that helps the body absorb the extra calcium. If you experience any numbness or tingling of the fingers, toes or around the mouth, please notify Dr. Brady or Dr. Sabra immediately.

****Also, if you have an upset stomach, STOP taking the Tums and call the office. DO NOT take any extra Tums.**

It is very common for patients to become constipated after surgery while on calcium supplementation. Please use Miralax or milk of magnesia as needed.

There is surgical glue on your incision that needs to stay in place for at least 10-14 days to protect the wound, and make the incision heal better. The stitches are all absorbable so there are none to take out. You can shower the day following thyroid or parathyroid surgery, and let the water and soap run over the incision as it is fine to get wet. Please apply ice packs to the wound on the neck as tolerated for the first 48 hours after the surgery. It is fine to sleep in a bed after the surgery, just try to rest on two pillows for the first 48 hours to minimize swelling.

Patients can drive when they are not taking narcotic medications and may return to work or full activity when they feel ready. This is typically about 1-2 weeks. Please limit lifting more than 10 lbs or any strenuous exercise for 10 to 14 days after surgery.

It is normal to have a sore throat (from the breathing tube) and a sensation of a "lump in the throat" after these procedures as the body fills with fluid where the thyroid or parathyroid glands were removed. Since our surgeons make smaller incisions and have to retract muscle in the region to allow for minimally invasive techniques, you may also feel a generalized soreness throughout the neck from positioning and retraction during surgery. It is also normal to feel a hard area near the incision that is scar tissue. This should improve after several weeks. Patients can also have some hoarseness and voice fatigue after surgery lasting from a few days to even a few months. These symptoms should fade away with time.

Bridget Brady, MD, FACS
John P. Sabra, MD, FACS

If the patient is taking thyroid replacement hormone, this can resume the day after surgery as before. Those patients not on thyroid hormone may start thyroid medication immediately or within a few weeks after a total thyroidectomy. After the thyroid is removed, thyroid hormone continues to circulate in the body for up to a few weeks. Those having a partial thyroid removal will likely not need thyroid medication after the operation, but we recommend checking thyroid levels six weeks after the operation.

Please call us if you have any questions or concerns. Our office number is 512.887.3187. For urgent or emergency concerns, call 911 first if necessary.