

's Care Guide after Thyroid or Parathyroid Surgery

I came to the hospital on _____ and left on _____

I came to the hospital because _____



How I may feel and what I should do

These symptoms are **normal**

I may feel pain

- I should take my pain medication before my pain gets really bad.
- I should follow the instructions on my medication bottle.
- I should use less narcotic pain medication as my pain gets better. **I shouldn't** need narcotic pain medication for more than 1-2 days. Examples are Percocet, Oxycodone, Tylenol 3, Morphine, or Hydromorphone.
- **I can't** drive or drink alcohol while taking narcotic pain medication.
- I should talk to my pharmacist about using Tylenol Extra Strength.

My notes and questions

I may feel constipated

- Pain medication can make it hard for me to have a bowel movement.
- I should drink lots of water, and eat lots of fruits and vegetables.
- **I shouldn't** strain or push too hard when having a bowel movement.
- I can take a stool softener like Senekot if I haven't had a bowel movement in 2 days. I should ask my pharmacist for help.

I may feel tired

- Pain medication can make me feel sleepy. I should rest when I'm tired.

I may not feel hungry

- I should eat smaller meals and snacks more often.

I may feel swollen

- **I shouldn't** lie flat for 48 hours after my surgery.
- I should use at least 2 pillows under my head when resting or sleeping.

These symptoms are **not normal**

- I have pain that doesn't get better when I take pain medication.
- I have pain that is getting worse.
- I have pain, redness, or swelling in my lower leg.
- My fingers or the area around my mouth is numb or tingling.
- My incision looks more red or swollen.
- My incision has yellow or green drainage.
- My temperature is over 38.0°C or I have chills.



These symptoms are **an emergency**

- My neck is suddenly more swollen.
- I'm having trouble breathing or swallowing.
- I have chest pain.
- My voice suddenly turns hoarse.

I need to **call 911**.

I need to **call my surgeon** or go to the **nearest emergency department** if I can't reach my surgeon.

How I should care for my incision

If I have a drain

- My nurse will teach me how to care for my drain.
- I can't shower until the day after my drain is taken out.

If I have steri-strips (small strips of tape on my incision)

- I should keep my incision dry for 7 days so the steri-strips stay on.
- The steri-strips should fall off on their own.
- If they haven't fallen off on their own, I can gently remove them after 2 weeks.

If I have staples or sutures

- My surgeon will take out my staples or sutures at my follow-up appointment.

My notes and questions

How my activities will change

Showering

- I need to keep my incision dry for 7 days. I can cover my incision with plastic wrap in the shower, or I clean myself with a wet washcloth and wash my hair in the sink.
- I can shower after 7 days. I can let soapy water run over my incision, but I shouldn't rub my incision.
- I can't have a bath, go swimming, or use a hot tub until I talk to my surgeon.
- I shouldn't use any creams on my incision unless I have talked to my surgeon.

Exercise and physical activity

- I should practice deep breathing to keep my lungs healthy.
- I should be active to help me gain strength and feel better.
- I should go for walks often, but I should take a break when I need one.
- I can't lift more than 10 pounds for 1-2 weeks after my surgery.

My medications

- I was given a list of medications I need to take.
- I was told why I need to take my medications.
- I was told about the side effects of my medications.

My appointments

- I was given a list of my appointments.
- Someone reviewed my list with me.
- I was told about the automated phone call.

Where I can go for more information

For information about...

I can call or go to...