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Post-Operative Instructions for Partial/Total Thyroidectomy

What to Expect:

Discomfort: You may have neck discomfort that will gradually improve after the first week after your procedure. A narcotic pain medication will be prescribed, take as directed to help control pain. Mild or moderate pain may be controlled with Ibuprofen or acetaminophen. An antibiotic will be prescribed, take as directed and complete the entire prescription.

Drainage: Drainage is expected from the incision site. You may cover the area with gauze if needed or left open to air.

Hoarseness: This is not uncommon and may last a week to several weeks.

Difficulty Swallowing: Sometimes there is a feeling of fullness, or a sensation that there may be something in the throat. This is not uncommon and will resolve over time.

Fever: You may have an elevated temperature for the first few days after the procedure, especially at night. You may take an over the counter medication to help reduce your temperature. Adequate fluid intake will also reduce the chance of dehydration and an elevated temperature.

Swelling: You may notice the area above your incision site is puffy or swollen after the procedure; this is absolutely normal and will decrease gradually.

Tingling/Twitching: This may be seen in cases of low calcium after TOTAL thyroidectomy only. It usually happens around the mouth and in the hands and feet. It can be very serious or even life threatening. In general Oscal D 2 tablets (over the counter) three times a day will resolve symptoms and will be weaned down by your surgeon. Please notify your surgeon of these symptoms.

Diet:

Start with a clear liquid diet (Water; Juices-apple and grape, Sports Drinks – 10-K, Gatorade, Powerade; 7-UP or Sprite; Popsicles, or Jell-O) to prevent nausea and/or vomiting. Advance diet as tolerated.

Activity:

- Light activity for the first 2 weeks after the procedure. No heavy lifting
- Sleep with head elevated for the first 72 hours after the procedure.
- You may bathe or shower 24 hours after the dressing is removed. Wash with soap and water, pat dry. **DO NOT** soak incision site or apply wet compresses. You may cover site with gauze if drainage is present. Apply ointment, as prescribed by your physician.

Any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call. Thank you for your confidence in letting us care for you and your family.