



Patient Information

Patient Information – Following Thyroid Surgery

This information leaflet contains some information and instructions that you should follow after having a thyroid surgery.

After General Anaesthetic

After any surgery, especially after a general anaesthetic, you may feel tired and disorientated. You should not drive or operate machinery for 48 hours following surgery. Insurance companies may not cover you in the event of an accident occurring within a few days of surgery.

What might I experience after the operation?

There will be a small dressing over your surgical wound. You should leave this on for 7-10 days before gently removing it. Don't worry if it comes off on its own earlier. You can gently wash the area with clean water and gently pat dry with a clean towel/cloth after. Do not rub. The scar will fade over the next few months.

Sometimes a drain (tube) may be placed in the wound after surgery to drain away any blood that may collect. The drain is usually removed after a day or two.

Returning to normal activities

You should be able to return to work and normal activities after two weeks depending on the extent of surgery and your type of work. It is normal to feel tired in the first few weeks.

When will I be followed up?

The healthcare team will usually arrange for you to come back to the Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) clinic in two to four weeks. The thyroid tissue will have been examined under a microscope and your surgeon will be able to tell you the results and discuss any further treatment or follow up with you. You will need your thyroid hormone levels checked regularly and you may need replacement with thyroxine treatment.



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What things should I look out for?

Some discomfort or pain is normal after an operation, regular pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen will help to ease this, always read packet instructions.

Complications are uncommon following surgery but can include:

- Infection:
A high temperature (more than 38°C), pus coming from wound, or if the wound becomes red, sore and painful may indicate infection. This will usually settle with antibiotics, please seek medical attention.
- Bleeding from wound or increasing neck swelling.
This can be serious and may cause swelling in your windpipe. If this happens, please seek immediate medical attention.
- Change in your voice:
The nerve that supplies your voice box runs through your neck and may be damaged during surgery. Most commonly this is temporary but can be permanent.
- Drop in your calcium levels:
A drop in calcium levels may cause muscle cramps or a tingling sensation around your mouth or the tips of your fingers. **If this happens, it can be serious, please attend the Emergency Department immediately.**
- Drop in your thyroid hormone levels:
This is more likely if most or all of your thyroid tissue is removed. Your thyroid hormone levels will need to be regularly checked by your GP and you may need lifelong replacement therapy.

How do I get in touch?

If you need any further advice, we advise that you contact the hospital using the contact numbers below. Your first point of contact should be the ENT department during working hours Monday to Friday 8am to 4.30 pm. Outside of these hours please contact the ward from which you were discharged, your emergency GP service or the NHS helpline.

ENT clinic Nurse:	01793 604414	(As above)
Children's Unit:	01793 604095	(24h / 7 days)
Day Surgery:	01793 604152 / 4148	(0800 - 2000 weekdays)
Daisy Ward:	01793 603040 / 3041	(24h / 7 days)
Meldon Ward:	01793 646276	(24h / 7 days)
Shalbourne Suite:	01793 646060	(24h / 7 days)
NHS Helpline:	111	(24h / 7 days)



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Please remember you were given the following pain relief while in hospital

Paracetamol at:

Codeine at:

Ibuprofen at:

Smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

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