

PATIENT INFORMATION ON PARATHYROIDECTOMY

What Is A Parathyroidectomy & When Is It Used?

A parathyroidectomy is a procedure in which the doctor removes part or all of your parathyroid glands. The parathyroid glands help to control the levels of calcium and phosphorus in the blood. Abnormal cells or cancer may change those levels. As a result, your bones may become weak. In addition, you may develop kidney stones, weakness in the muscles, decreased alertness, or stomach pain. You may just have a lump in your neck. This procedure is done when you have abnormal cells or cancer in some or all of these glands or if the glands are overactive.

An alternative is to choose not to have treatment, recognizing the risks of your condition. You should ask your doctor about these choices.

What Preparation Is Required For Surgery?

- Plan for your care and recovery after the operation. Allow for time to rest and try to find people to help you with your day-to-day duties.
- You should **refrain from eating, drinking, and chewing tobacco after midnight the night before your surgery**. You should **refrain from smoking 24 hours before your operation**. People who smoke prior to general anesthesia are 20 times more likely than non-smokers to have episodes of inadequate oxygen supply to the heart (which could be interpreted as a heart attack).
- If you take medication on a daily basis, our surgeons request that **only heart and blood pressure medications** be taken with a sip of water the morning of your surgery, unless otherwise instructed. If you take **aspirin, blood thinners, or arthritis medication** your surgeon will discuss the proper time to discontinue these before your operation.
- If you are on **insulin, take half of your usual dose the day of the surgery**, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor. Your blood sugar will be checked at the hospital if needed.
- You should shower or bathe the night before or the morning of your surgery.
- Routine pre-operative testing may be required (blood tests, EKG, chest x-rays). Depending on your medical condition, you may need clearance from your cardiologist, pulmonologist, or family physician before your operation can be performed.
- If you **require antibiotics prior to a dental procedure**, instruct your surgeon, you may also require antibiotics prior to your surgery.

What Happens During The Surgery?

- General anesthesia is used, therefore the patient is asleep throughout the procedure.
- The doctor will make an incision in your neck and expose the four parathyroid glands. If the glands are in an abnormal position, the doctor may need to explore the front of your neck to find them. To do this the doctor may make more than one cut. The doctor will remove glands or portions of glands depending on your condition. If the doctor suspects cancer cells in the parathyroid glands, they may remove some of the tissue surrounding the glands.

What Happens After The Surgery?

- You will be in the hospital for about 1-2 days, depending on your condition.
- You may have a lot of swelling in the neck and find it hard to talk and swallow.
- You may need to take calcium to avoid having spasms in the muscles.
- If a muscle in your neck was cut, you may need a headrest until it heals.
- You will have a scar in the front of your neck.

What Are The Risks & Complications Of The Surgery?

- Complications can occur with any operation and include bleeding, blood clots, and infection.
- The laryngeal nerves may be injured. These nerves allow you to speak normally. If they are damaged, the damage may be temporary or permanent, and your voice may be hoarse.
- You may experience post-operative hypoparathyroidism (inadequate parathyroid function) including weakness, muscle spasm, and cardiac irregularities.
- If nausea occurs and does not subside, please call the office nurse and have your pharmacy ready.

- If you develop a **temperature over 100.5°**, redness around the incisions, or yellowish drainage from the incision sites, you may have a wound infection and should call the office to be seen as soon as possible.
- You should call if you **feel faint** (as if you will pass out) or develop **worsening pain** (that the pain medicines do not control).
- Different patients experience different degrees of pain, but most will have some pain for 2 to 4 days after the operation. Narcotic pain medicine is prescribed with one or two refills. Most people take fewer than 10 tablets, but some patients will require a prescription refill. Be sure to eat before taking pain medicine to avoid nausea and vomiting. You may ride in a car but should not drive a car while you are in significant pain or are taking narcotic pain pills.
- For **gas or bloating** an over-the-counter medication such as Mylicon or Maalox may be taken.
- If you become **constipated** (narcotic pain pills can contribute to this), you can take an over-the-counter laxative such as Milk of Magnesia, Fleets enema, Dulcolax suppositories or tablets, mineral oil, or some warm prune juice.
- **Office hours are 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, except for holidays.** In case of an emergency after hours, call our **office number 872-1158** and the answering service will contact the doctor on call. If you have **routine questions**, call our office.

It is the patients responsibility to call and make the follow up appointment within 2 days after your surgery or after being released from the hospital.

IF YOU FEEL YOU ARE SERIOUSLY ILL, YOU SHOULD GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IMMEDIATELY!