

Parathyroidectomy Instructions

The parathyroid glands are a set of four glands in the neck that function to regulate the body's calcium levels. One or more glands may be removed because they are working too much (hyperparathyroidism), or rarely, due to the presence of cancer. High levels of calcium in the blood, osteoporosis, and kidney stones can result from over-active parathyroid glands.

The operation takes place under general anesthesia through an incision in the neck. One or more glands are removed.

The parathyroid glands are usually located behind the thyroid gland, and are near other important structures in the neck, which are at risk during surgery. These structures include the thyroid gland (regulates the body's metabolism) and the laryngeal nerves (control the vocal cords).

Postoperative Period

- ***You will spend the night in the hospital.*** During this time the wound is monitored, as are your calcium levels in the blood.
- ***Mild to moderate postoperative pain is normal.*** This is easily controlled with medication.
- ***A surgical drain in the wound is sometimes necessary*** to prevent accumulation of fluid under the wound.
- ***Sore throat and discomfort with swallowing*** are due to general anesthesia and the surgery itself, and are short term only.
- ***Voice hoarseness*** may be temporary or permanent, depending on the nature of your parathyroid problem. Usually the voice sounds normal within 1-2 weeks of surgery, but if not, please notify your surgeon.
- ***Decreased blood calcium levels*** may manifest as numbness and tingling around the mouth & fingers, spontaneous twitching in the face or mouth, and muscle spasm and cramping. Please notify your surgeon or go to the Emergency Room if this condition occurs. Treatment typically involves oral calcium supplements.
- ***Bleeding*** is rare after parathyroid surgery. If this occurs, extensive swelling of the neck can occur and may need to be drained. Notify your surgeon or go the Emergency Room immediately.
- ***You will need to rest (off work or school) for 1 week after surgery. No vigorous activity should be performed for 2 weeks.*** Also, rapid head turning should be avoided for 1-2 weeks.

Medication

You will be given a prescription pain medication. You may also be given calcium supplements to prevent low calcium levels in the blood.

Follow up

We will see you in the office about 1 week after surgery to check your wound, remove any skin sutures, and to go over your pathology results. You may be instructed to follow-up with your primary care physician or an endocrinologist to further monitor your calcium and parathyroid hormone levels.