

Post-Operative Advice for Neck Surgery

Dressing

Post-surgery you will have a large pressure/ compression dressing on your neck. This is to decrease the chances of swelling and bleeding. Do not try to remove the dressing. Do not let the dressing get wet. A loose dressing can be retightened if required. The dressing will generally be removed 2-5 days after surgery. Apply an antibiotic ointment to the incision site two to three times daily only on the suture, not required on steri-strips. For male patients, it is advised not to shave for at least 15 days.

Drain

You may have a drain fixed to your neck near the operated site. It is placed to avoid any collection in the operated area. It is generally removed 1-7 days after surgery depending on the drain amount.

Wound/Scar

After dressing removal, local wound care would be explained. For scar cream can be prescribed later on.

You may experience numbness near/ over the operated site which usually resolves over time. Complete wound healing may take up to 3 months.

Pain

Some neck or facial pain or stiffness near the operated site is expected during the first week. You will be prescribed the required pain killers.

Swelling

Swelling around the operated side/ face /jaw may occur, which will subside over time, however, any increasing/undue/red swelling should be reported.

Fever

Can be observed from 1-5 post-operative days. Temperature above 101 F should be reported.

Sore throat/ fullness/Hoarseness

This may happen not due to surgery per se but due to a breathing tube put during general anesthesia to provide oxygen to the lungs or sometimes due to swelling around the nerves supplying the voice box. This usually resolves with time.

Showering

You may shower regularly after 48 hrs. If sutures are there apply ointment before showering else it's fine to get steri-strips wet.

Activity

Avoid bending over, strenuous activity, heavy weight lifting. However, you are advised to move as much as possible. You may gently keep moving your neck from side to side up to 3-4 times daily to avoid muscle stiffness. Try to sleep with head elevated for up to 1 week after the surgery.

Diet

For the first few days avoid solid foods or foods that need much chewing. You can resume a normal diet after 7 days.

Pathology

The specimen removed will be sent for microscopic examination, depending on the result (takes 5-7 days) treatment/management will be further discussed with you.

Concern after parotid and submandibular gland surgeries

Parotid surgeries include the risk of injury to nerves supplying muscles that move the face. Few (20-30%) patients may have weakness of one or more nerve branches. Which usually resolves over time in a few weeks. You will be given the required measures and physiotherapy if this happens.

Concern after thyroid surgeries

Tingling around the mouth/ Muscle cramps or pain in hands and fingers

This is due to temporary or permanent non-functioning parathyroid which results in low calcium levels. Kindly report immediately to the hospital during such an event.

If you undergo total gland removal you will be given supplement meds, regular tests are required for a longer period to titrate the doses.