Atlantic Health System

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Recovering from Surgery: What to expect

Incision Care:

The incision is going to be covered with skin glue called Dermabond. The skin glue will stay on for about 2 weeks and/or until your post-operative visit. **Do not** cover the glue with any type of ointment, band-aids, or any other covers.

Physical restrictions:

Do not lift anything over 20 pounds. Do not engage in any activities that may lead to sweating or straining. Do not engage in activities in an unclean environment (exercise, gardening, lawn care, dusting the house) for 2 weeks following your surgery. Do not drive while taking pain medication. Advise waiting 2 weeks to drive and when able to comfortably move neck without restrictions. Most patients may resume their normal day-to-day activities within days after surgery.

Shower:

You may resume taking a shower in 2 days. Do not cover the incision; it is okay if it gets wet. Simply pat dry after showering. Do not scratch or peel off the skin glue, just pat it dry with a towel. Do not allow prolonged exposure to water on your incision such as submerging in bath or pool.

Pain:

Most patients have little pain. Some patients may feel discomfort swallowing or pressure after the surgery. This normally resolves with time. If you develop mild pain, you can take over the counter Tylenol or Ibuprofen. You may also apply an ice pack to the area if you are experiencing discomfort and/or mild swelling. Apply for 10-20 minutes every 1-2 hours while awake for the first 48 hours following surgery. If your symptoms are not alleviated, please contact our office.

Do not drive if you are taking prescribed pain medicine.

Low calcium level:

If you have a total thyroidectomy or parathyroidectomy, please read this section carefully. Your procedure may cause low calcium. This can happen secondary to temporary malfunction of parathyroid glands located on or near the thyroid gland. They are responsible for regulating your calcium levels.

Due to the nature of surgery, all patients with total thyroidectomy or parathyroidectomy will go home with instructions on how to take calcium pills for a 4-week taper. We recommend patients take **calcium carbonate (500mg or 600mg) with Vitamin D which can be purchased over the counter.**

Symptoms of low calcium may develop a few days after surgery, usually not within first 24 hours.

If you develop tingling or cramps of both hands and feet and/or numbness of face (around the mouth)- this may indicate that the calcium is low. In this case, you should IMMEDIATELY take 2 calcium pills (which could total 1000mg to 1200mg, depending on pill dosage). Then, wait 30 minutes and if the symptoms subside, resume your post-operative instructions for your calcium schedule.

If your symptoms do not subside, take another two calcium pills wait 30 minutes-if symptoms are not resolved after 30 minutes and take another 3rd dose of 1000 mg of calcium- Call the doctor at in 30 minutes after 3rd dose only if symptoms are not resolved.

If you are given a prescription for calcium, make sure you are taking it around the clock, without a long night break. This will require you to wake up in the middle of the night to take the medication.

The exact dosage amount will be prescribed on your discharge instructions:- please refer to your After Visit Summary

Below is a sample of calcium dosing:

500mg or 600mg tablet every 6 hours for the 1st week

500mg or 600mg tablet every 8 hours for the 2nd week

500mg or 600mg every 12 hours for the 3rd and 4th week

A side effect of calcium can be constipation. If that occurs, we will ask you to use a stool softener and increase your fluid intake.

Please reserve your phone calls for emergencies only. If you have questions regarding the type and timing of calcium, please call during usual office hours.

Thyroid Hormone Replacement

If you have had a total thyroidectomy, a prescription for the thyroid medication will be given. Levothyroxine (Synthroid or Tirosint) should be taken on a daily basis for life, every morning, on an empty stomach, about 1hour prior to a meal, by itself with no other medications. The dose will be calculated per body weight and will have to be readjusted in about 2-3 months by your endocrinologist based on serum TSH level. Be sure to

schedule an appointment with your endocrinologist to be 4-6 weeks after surgery.

Post-Surgical Travel Restrictions:

For your safety and optimal recovery, **you must remain in the state for 2 weeks following your thyroid surgery**.

- **Absolutely no air travel** (domestic or international) during this period.
  - **No out-of-state travel** is permitted for 2 weeks post-operatively.

If you have any questions or foresee any travel conflicts, please speak with your clinician **prior to surgery**.

Post-operative Follow up office visit:

Please call the office 2-3 days after your surgery to schedule your post-operative visit. We will see you approximately 2-3 weeks after your surgery to check your surgical incision and review your pathology report.

STRETCHING EXERCISE VIDEOS AVAILABLE

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9529300/



1. Neutral and relaxed posture (preparation)



2. Look down (stretching and movement)



3. Look to both sides (movement)



4. Incline head to both sides (stretching)



5. Stretching the oblique neck muscles (stretching)



6. Nodding exercise to both sides (movement)



7. Lift the shoulders (movement)

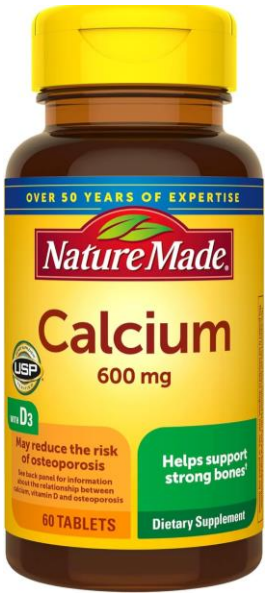


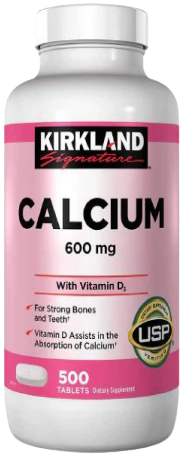
8. Turn shoulders round in both directions (movement)



9. Slowly lift arms fully then lower them (movement)









Examples only, Any Brand can be used.

-calcium carbonate 500 or 600mg (tabs or caplets/capsules) with Vitamin D!!

-sold over the counter at any pharmacy, online, health store- **no prescription needed**

-DO NOT SUBSTITUTE WITH CALCIUM CITRATE

-DO NOT PURCHASE GUMMIES,TUMS, CHEWABLES, OR “ONCE DAILY” PILLS.

Kosher Calcium

