



Dr. Huang's Post-Thyroidectomy Instructions

Guidelines for Recovery After Thyroid Surgery

Incision Care: Steri-Strips

- **Steri-Strips:** You have steri strips (small paper tape) along your incision. These help protect the incision as it heals.
 - **Showering:** You may shower as usual. Gently pat the incision area dry afterward.
 - **Avoid Soaking:** Do not soak in a tub, pool, or hot tub until cleared by your doctor.
 - **Let Steri-Strips Fall Off Naturally:** The steri strips will fall off on their own over time. Do not peel them off.

Drain Care (If Applicable)

If a drain was placed during surgery, follow these instructions carefully to manage it:

- **Emptying the Drain:**
 - Open the cap at the top and tip the contents into a cup to empty.
 - Squeeze the bulb to create suction, then replace the cap to reactivate the drain.
- **Clearing the Drain:**
 - Carefully “strip” the drain by holding the entry point near the skin with one hand and gently pulling back on the tubing with the other. This helps to prevent clots.
- **Drain Maintenance:**
 - Empty the drain **three times a day** and record the output. Bring these numbers to your follow-up appointment.
 - The drain will be removed when output is less than 30 mL over 24 hours. For removal, please come to the clinic as scheduled.
 - **Keep Dry and Clean:** The drain is sutured in place, so keep it dry. Change the dressing sponge around the drain daily or as needed if it becomes soiled.

Low Calcium Management

After a thyroidectomy, there is a risk of low calcium levels. Follow these steps if you experience symptoms of low calcium:

- **If You Notice Symptoms of Low Calcium:**
 - **Symptoms:** Tingling or numbness in your hands, feet, or around your mouth; muscle spasms; weakness; shakiness; or a slow/irregular heartbeat.
 - **Take Calcium (Tums):** Take **2 Tums (1000 mg calcium carbonate total)** every 15 minutes until symptoms resolve.
 - **Emergency Room:** If symptoms persist after three doses of calcium or if they worsen, go to the nearest emergency room to have your calcium levels checked.

Signs of Low Calcium to Watch For:

- Tingling or numbness in hands, feet, or lips
- Muscle spasms, weakness, or uncontrollable shaking
- Seizures
- Slow, uneven heartbeat or lightheadedness
- Mood changes: anxiety, depression, anger, confusion, or hallucinations

Take calcium as directed above and seek emergency care if symptoms persist or worsen.

When to Contact Dr. Huang's Office or Seek Emergency Care

Contact Dr. Huang's nurse at 402-403-3094 extension 123 OR Option #2 followed by Option #2

Please call Dr. Huang's office during the day or go to the nearest emergency room at night if you experience any of the following:

- **Shortness of Breath:** Difficulty breathing that is worsening.
- **Increasing Difficulty Swallowing:** If it becomes harder to swallow or causes discomfort.
- **Incision Concerns:** Redness, increasing pain, or swelling around the incision.

Patient Acknowledgment of Understanding I acknowledge that I have reviewed and understand the risks, benefits, and alternatives to thyroidectomy surgery and agree to follow the post-operative instructions provided.

Patient Signature: _____

Date: _____