

Endocrine & Oncologic Surgical Associates
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POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

1. You must have an adult drive you home from the facility. You will not be allowed to drive, use public transportation, taxi, or Uber. You may drive the day after surgery providing that you are not taking narcotic medications.
2. You must have a responsible adult stay with you for a minimum of 24 hours. You should not be left alone. This is important because of danger of falling and you may lose concept of time of day and overmedicate.
3. The effects of anesthesia can persist for 24 hours. Use extreme caution before engaging in any activity that could be harmful to yourself or others.
4. Drink fluids to help rid the body of the drugs used in surgery and to stay well hydrated. The urine should be a light yellow color.
5. Diet may be as tolerated. Eating foods that are bland and soft for the first day or so may be best tolerated. Feeling a lump in the throat when swallowing is normal. Remember to take pain medications with food.
6. Avoid the use of alcoholic beverages for the first 24 hours and as long as pain medications are being used.
7. Take only medications that have been prescribed to you and taken them according to the instruction on the bottle.
8. You can expect moderate discomfort, which should be helped by the pain medication. The greatest discomfort is usually during the first 24 hours. Thereafter, you will find that you require less pain medication. It may help to intersperse over the counter pain relievers such as Tylenol or Motrin. Avoid aspirin.
9. You may shower the day after surgery. Please do not use bathtub or pool for 2 weeks after surgery. Do not use a hot tub for 4 weeks. Plan to keep the incision and surrounding skin as clean as possible.
10. Leave the surgical glue and tape in place. Do not attempt to pick at or remove the dressing. Do not apply make up or lotion over the glue. The glue has a purple tint, this is not a bruise.

11. Expect that the neck will swell or develop a firm lump, particularly under the incision. Ice and rest will help. Sometimes fluid may accumulate under the incision. If this does not go away on its own, it can be aspirated by Dr. Garner in the office.
12. Expect that your voice may sound a little raspy or deeper. It is normal to feel that you have to clear the throat more often or the feeling that something is stuck. Patients who sing will note that the range is lower and the ability to project is lessened. Shouting is more difficult and the voice may wear out with prolonged talking. This is usually temporary.
13. If given thyroid medication, take the pill first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. You may take it with whatever liquid you like, but wait 30 minutes before eating solid food. If you forget your thyroid medication, take it whenever it is remembered. If not remembered until the next day, do not double up on dosage. Avoid taking thyroid medication at the same time as vitamins or medications given for acid reflux. Keep medications in a dark dry area. The bathroom is not ideal given humidity.
14. If you take Coumadin, please arrange to have your INR checked within the first week of surgery by this office or your PCP or managing physician. Thyroid medication can affect INR levels and may require adjustment of dosage.
15. After surgery, it is important to have a bowel movement within a day or two. If you do not, you may take Milk of Magnesia. Avoid stimulant laxatives.
16. Plan for minimal physical activity for the first 48 hours. Limit lifting, pulling, or pushing. Coughing and sneezing feel terrible so do not be afraid of taking allergy medication if you are prone to this.
17. For the first week after surgery, avoid any activity that might involve hyperextension or strain of the neck (for example, hair wash at a salon).
18. For the first 48 hours, plan to sleep with the head elevated on at least 2-3 pillows and avoid lying flat.
19. Avoid smoking, if possible, for the first week after surgery. Nicotine will delay wound healing.
20. Diabetic patients will keep special watch on blood sugars to ensure optimal blood glucose to allow wound healing.
21. Do not allow animals to sleep in your bed for the first 2 weeks after surgery. They will understand and you do not need to be exposed to bacteria and dander.
22. Plan to use sunscreen on the scar after the glue and tape fall away to lessen scarring. Any lotion is fine to use for skin moisturizer.

23. If you notice any signs of numbness or tingling to extremities or face or if you develop muscle cramps, refer to calcium work sheet. Low calcium symptoms will usually appear within 72 hours of the surgery. Keep in mind, it can be normal to take more than 20 calcium pills if you are having symptoms. If you are taking more than this, please call the office.
24. If you are concerned about bruising or low calcium symptoms, always call the office first to see if an emergency room visit is warranted. Even after hours, a message will be sent to the doctor. If you hang up without leaving a message, we will not have record of your call. You may be asked to text a picture of your incision.
25. If you choose to go to the emergency room, always ask that Dr. Garner be called before treatment is initiated to help guide your care. There is no reason for a CT scan to diagnose a neck hematoma. Low calcium does not need to be treated with a CT of the head. Calling the office or Dr. Garner if you are worried can usually prevent need for ED visit.
26. Expect a phone call from the office around 2-3 business days after the surgery with pathology results. The office will arrange a post operative visit 2-3 weeks out from surgery. Expect a non fasting blood test at that visit.
27. Expect to feel more emotional and irritable following surgery. This is not the new normal and will pass in time. Endocrine surgery patients report higher levels of fatigue than almost any other surgery. Low calcium levels can also cause feelings of anxiety and that it is difficult to cope. Keep calm.
28. Set reasonable expectations about return to work. Patients usually return in a week but professions involving heavy physical activity may need more. FMLA paperwork is ideally handled by the office prior to surgery and can always be adjusted depending on your recovery.