

# Postoperative Thyroid Surgery Instructions

*Dr. Healy - Dr. Keele - Dr. Tubbs - Dr. Ramsey*

## Contact Information:

- **Glacier Ear Nose and Throat - (406) 752-8330**
  - 9am to 5pm, Monday-Friday
  - After 5 pm and weekends, an "on call" provider is available.
- **The HealthCenter - (406) 751-7550**

## When should I call my doctor?

- If I am worried, my doctor is worried! I will call my doctor's office.
- If I have numbness, tingling or muscle cramps in my hands, feet or lips, I will call my doctor, go to the Emergency Room or if alone call 911.
  - I may have dangerously low calcium levels.
  - I will not drive if I experience this.
- I will call if I have signs of an infection, such as redness, drainage, warmth, pain or swelling around my incision or a fever above 101.5 degrees.
- If I am short of breath or have chest pain with no activity, I will call my doctor's office.

## What should I expect after surgery?

- I will have a sore throat and hoarse voice for several days.
- I will have painful swallowing for several days.

## When will I see my doctor?

- I need to have a follow-up appointment with my doctor in 1 week after surgery.
- I will have my thyroid hormone levels checked one month from surgery. I can do this with my primary care doctor or my doctor at Glacier Ear, Nose and Throat.

## How will I take my medication?

- I will take my medication EXACTLY as instructed.
- I will not take calcium within 3 hours of taking my thyroid medication (Levothyroxine or Synthroid).
- I will take calcium (like Tums), 3 times per day for 2 weeks. If I take reflux medication (like Prilosec or Prevacid), I will not take calcium within 4 hours of taking reflux medication.

## What about my pain?

- I will have some discomfort.
- I may use over the counter Ibuprofen or Tylenol.
- I may be given a prescription for narcotic pain medication if Ibuprofen and Tylenol is not enough.
  - I will not take extra Tylenol if I am taking Norco, Lortab or Percocet because they have it in it.
  - I will not drive if I am taking narcotic pain medication.
  - Narcotic pain medication may cause constipation. I will drink extra fluids and I may need a stool softener.
- I will take acid reflux medication if my doctor instructs me to.
- I will follow pain medication instructions given by my nurse or pharmacist.

