



Dr. Patrick McCrea

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Thyroid and Parathyroid Surgery

This is an instruction sheet for patients scheduled for Thyroid or Parathyroid Surgery. Read carefully. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital operating room booking office will contact you about a date for your surgery. Please contact our office if you believe there is an error in the type of surgery that is being arranged.

You will likely meet with surgery clinic nurses at the hospital to learn more about your procedure and what to expect. You may also have investigations such as blood work, cardiogram, and x-rays prior to your surgery. Depending on your health, you may meet with an anesthesiologist or other specialists.

In advance of your surgery, you should notify your employer of anticipated absence and make sure that you have help at home if you should need it. Depending on your health and surgery you may go home the day of surgery or be admitted to the hospital. In either case, you will be discharged from the hospital when it is medically appropriate. Further recovery is best done at home.

There is a small chance that your surgery will be delayed or moved to another date to accommodate other patients with surgical emergencies. If your own condition worsens prior to surgery and you are unwell you should go to the emergency department for evaluation.

Preparing for Surgery

Lifestyle: Please try to eat a balanced diet, exercise, quit/reduce smoking, and quit/reduce alcohol. Healthy choices better prepare you and your body for surgery and decreases surgical complications.

Making Arrangements: You will have a general anaesthetic and cannot legally drive for 24 hours after your surgery. Please make arrangements to have a responsible adult available to drive you home afterwards. If you do not have someone available, your operation will be cancelled. Arrange to have someone around at home to help you.

Medications and Herbals: Please contact Dr. McCrea if you have had any changes to medications. If you take blood thinners (*Ticlid/Ticlopidine, Pradex/Dabigatran, Coumadin/Warfarin, or Plavix/clopidogrel*), Dr. McCrea, an internist, or the Hematology service will be instructing you how to take your medication. The following herbals can cause bleeding and must be stopped 7 days in advance: *Gingko Biloba, Ginseng, Ginger, and Garlic.*

Night before and Morning of Surgery: Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the day before surgery. Do not take insulin, diabetic pills or fluid pills the morning of your surgery unless otherwise instructed. Bring your medications, in their original bottles, to the hospital on the day of surgery.

Day of Surgery: Thyroid surgery will take approximately 1-2 hours and you will be in the recovery room for 2 hours afterwards.



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Post-Operative Instructions

What to Expect: Depending on the complexity of your surgery, you may stay overnight in hospital. Your throat may be sore from the breathing tube. Cough drops and throat lozenges are soothing. You will have a necklace type incision on your lower neck. You should have minimal bruising around your incision after surgery. You may have a drain placed but this would be removed prior to discharge.

Diet: You may resume a solid diet as soon as you are hungry. Drink plenty of water and fluids like Gatorade the first few days.

Wound Care: You will have steri-strip tapes over the incisions. You may shower after 48 hours after surgery but avoid scrubbing the steri-strips and dry them afterwards. Avoid bathing or swimming for one week. The strips can come off at one week time. Call the office if you have swelling or if there are any signs of infection such as pain, redness, or persistent drainage.

Pain Control: You should not have severe pain after surgery. The use of narcotics causes unnecessary problems with constipation and nausea and should be avoided when possible; if you are constipated, Colace is a stool softener that can help. The best pain medications are Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and Ibuprofen (Advil). Advil should be avoided in patients with kidney disease. You should take Tylenol and Advil regularly every 6 hours for 48 hours then as needed after this.

New Medications and Laboratory Tests: You may have impaired thyroid and/or parathyroid function following surgery which can be temporary or permanent. You may be given new medications following surgery (Levothyroxine, Calcium, and Vitamin D). Your family doctor will follow your lab values and adjust doses appropriately.

Exercise and Activity: You may or may not feel tired the night of surgery but by the next day you should be walking and resuming all non-strenuous activities. You may progressively increase your activity level and exercise. If an activity is uncomfortable, stop it and retry the next day. At 1 week time, you should be back to your full level of activities.

Driving and Return to Work/School: You may return to modified or light work duties 3 days after your surgery. Most employers/schools will accommodate modified duties. At 2 weeks time, there are no restrictions. You can drive and operate machinery only if you are not taking narcotics and you feel comfortable reacting to an emergency.

Follow-up and Emergencies: Call the office at 902.368.7610 to make a follow-up appointment for 4 weeks after surgery. If you have any problems or questions, do not hesitate to call the office. If you feel unwell or have fever, vomiting, bleeding wound, or increasing pain then go to the emergency room.