

DRS. GEHRIS, JORDAN, DAY & ASSOCIATES, LLC

Head and Neck Surgery . Ear, Nose and Throat Surgery . Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery

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Thyroidectomy & Parathyroidectomy Post-op Instructions

1. Wound care – You may leave the hospital with a drain in place. Generally, this drain will be removed at the office 24 to 48 hours after surgery. After drain removal, fluid may drain from the wound for several days. Any swelling, redness or increase in tenderness of the wound needs to be reported to your surgeon. Whether staples or sutures are used to close the wound, you will need to do twice daily suture line care by cleaning away any crust gently with a Q-tip and peroxide, and then apply a little Neosporin or Bacitracin ointment. The appearance of the scar can be helped by using “Mederma” or similar cream for several months after surgery.
2. Swallowing may be mildly painful, but not worse. Breathing should be normal. If any difficulty with breathing, be sure to notify your surgeon.
3. If your voice is hoarse or breathy, this may be a complication of surgery. The surgeon should be able to give an assessment of the situation. It may take many weeks or months for function to return; occasionally, injections or operations are necessary to restore the voice.
4. Parathyroid surgery and sometimes thyroid surgery may affect the calcium level, which in turn affects muscle function. Generally, with Parathyroid surgery and total thyroidectomy, these Calcium levels are checked over a period of 24 hours following surgery, but the calcium levels can drop more slowly and it may require a specific type of calcium test to detect the deficiency, especially with a condition known as “hungry bone syndrome”. Be sure to report any hand or foot spasms immediately to your surgeon. If the spasms are frequent or severe, go immediately to the emergency room closest to you so you can be given Calcium intravenously if needed. Depending on removal of thyroid and parathyroids, some patients may need to take Synthroid, Calcium, and Vitamin D or some combination of these three medications forever.

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