

Partial Glossectomy Surgery

What is a partial glossectomy?

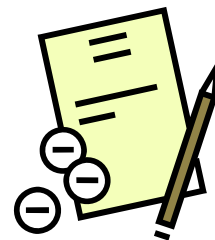
A partial glossectomy is an operation which removes part of the tongue. Some cancers of the tongue have a risk of spreading to the lymph glands in your neck. Therefore, during surgery, your surgeon may make small incisions in one or both sides of your neck to remove these lymph glands.

If you have a small portion of your tongue removed you will be able to go home the same day or the morning after surgery. You will need to do good mouth care for 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. The nurse will teach you how to do mouth care and will give you a pamphlet with instructions to follow at home.

What do I need to do before surgery?

You must come to the Pre-Admission Assessment Clinic 1 to 2 weeks before surgery to have any blood work, X-rays and other tests your doctor orders.

Bring a record of all your medications to the clinic so the nurses and anaesthesiologist can see what you are taking. At this appointment the nurse will go over all of the steps you need to follow before surgery at home. You will get a checklist to take home.



Follow the instructions the nurse gives you about when to stop eating and drinking before surgery. This depends on the time of your surgery. If you regularly take medication each morning, you will be told if you should take it the morning of surgery. If you are allowed to take your medication, take it with a small sip of water only.

You may need to scrub your neck and chest with a special brush. This scrub clears the skin of germs that may cause an infection. The nurse will tell you how and where to do this. If your doctor wants you to shave the area at home, the nurse will show you where to shave.

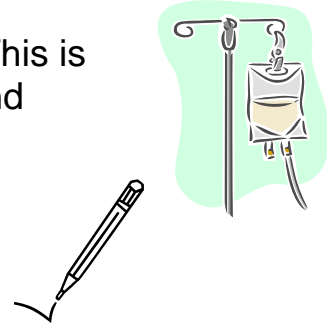
You must also brush your teeth and tongue well the morning before surgery. Gargle with mouthwash after brushing your teeth and tongue.

On the day of surgery – Day Surgery Unit

You will check in at the Day Surgery Unit 2 hours before surgery. In the Day Surgery Unit you will get ready for surgery by changing into hospital clothes. The nurse will go over some questions and answer any questions you have.

You will have a thin tube put into a vein in your arm. This is called an intravenous or IV. The IV gives you fluids and medications when needed.

The anaesthesiologist will visit you before surgery. You will also have the surgery area marked with a special pen.



In the Operating Room

You go into the Operating Room when it is time for surgery. The room is cool. The team will greet you and help make you comfortable on a special table. Before the team starts they take some time to make sure you are the right patient and the right surgery is done. This is called the “surgical pause”.

What to expect after Partial Glossectomy Surgery

How will I feel after surgery?

After surgery you will go to the recovery room. You will be watched closely by the nurses until you are fully awake. If you feel pain or have an upset stomach, there is medication that will help.

On the Unit

When you are fully awake, you will be transferred to the Day Surgery Unit, Short Stay Unit or the Head and Neck Unit. This depends on how long your doctor wants you to stay. You will have a call bell beside you to use when you want help.

Intravenous

After surgery, you will have the IV in your arm. The IV gives you fluids until you are feeling better and able to swallow. Medication can also be given through the IV. The nurses make sure the IV is working well and giving you enough fluids.

Cleaning your mouth

Your mouth will be cleaned every 4 hours. The nurse uses a large syringe filled with solution to rinse your mouth. If you go home the same day, you will be taught how to rinse your mouth every 4 hours. It is very important to do this after eating.

Will I be able to eat?

Good nutrition is important to help you heal well. After surgery, you will be able to eat by mouth. You will begin taking fluids such as juice, milk, milkshakes, puddings, ice cream and strained soups. Most people find thicker fluids such as nectar and milkshakes easier to control than thin fluids like water and juice. You will stay on fluids until you see your doctor for follow-up. Your doctor will tell you when to start eating soft textured food. You will need to keep your mouth clean by rinsing after everything you eat and drink. If you are in the hospital, you will have help to eat if you need it.

What activity can I do?

After surgery, you need to move around to prevent breathing and circulation problems. Moving also helps you build up your strength and recover faster.

Within 2 to 6 hours after surgery, you will be able to sit at the side of your bed. You will also be encouraged to do deep breathing and circulation exercises.

If you are in the hospital, over the next few days, you will be encouraged to walk around and look after yourself as much as you can. Any time you get up, you will need to wear shoes with non-slip soles and full backs and toes for your safety.

How will I communicate?

Most people are able to speak fairly clearly after surgery. If your speech has been affected by surgery, a speech-language pathologist may meet with you to assess your ability to speak and give you some information on how to improve your communication.

Before you go home

If you have been in the hospital more than 1 or 2 days the Community Care Access (CCAC) Manager will arrange any professional services you need at home such as a visiting nurse, dietitian or social worker.

The CCAC Manager will also arrange support services such as dressing supplies, equipment rental, medications, transportation and homemaking. You will be given an appointment to see your surgeon 1 to 3 weeks after you go home. You will also get any prescriptions you need for medications before you leave the hospital.

At Home

Cleaning your mouth

You will need to keep your mouth clean to promote healing and prevent infection. You may rinse with a mouthwash solution or normal saline. You should do your mouth care after every meal. Make sure there are no pieces of food trapped as these can cause infection.

Nutrition

If you have questions or concerns, call the dietitian at 905- 522-1155 ext. 33509.

Communication

If you need more help with communication after you go home, this can be arranged by your doctor.


Watch for signs of infection:

- increased drainage from mouth
- foul smelling breathe
- increased temperature or pain

Contact your doctor or the Head and Neck Unit at St. Joseph's Hospital if you have any of these signs.

Who to call if you need help?

If you have questions or concerns call your Surgeon or the Head and Neck Unit at St. Joseph's Hospital.

 Surgeon's number: _____

 The Head and Neck Unit: 905-522-1155 ext. 33504