

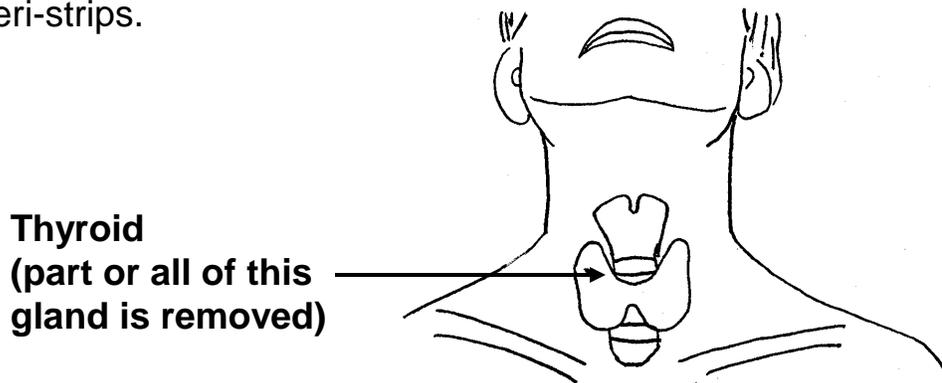
## Thyroidectomy Surgery

### What is the thyroid gland?

The thyroid gland is located in the front of the neck. It makes 2 hormones called thyroxine (called T4) and triiodothyronine (called T3). These 2 hormones are released into your blood and travel all over your body. They help many organs in your body work.

### What is a thyroidectomy?

A thyroidectomy is an operation that removes part or all of the thyroid gland in the neck. The surgeon makes a small incision in the front of the neck to do this. The incision is closed with sutures or special tape called steri-strips.



### 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 bloodwork, X-rays and other tests your doctor orders. In this clinic, you will talk to a nurse and an anaesthesiologist. You will learn how to get ready for surgery and have your questions answered.

Bring a record of all your medication to the clinic so the nurses and anaesthesiologist can see what you are taking.

You cannot eat or drink anything after midnight on the day before your surgery.

If you take medication each morning, the clinic nurse will tell you if you should take it the morning of surgery.



# What to expect after surgery

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## 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 awake. If you feel pain or have an upset stomach, the nurse will give you medication to help.

After recovery, some people go to the Day Surgery Unit and then home. Others go to a Surgical Unit then home. Your surgeon decides where you will go.



## On the Day Surgery Unit

The nurses will monitor your blood pressure, breathing, heart rate, incision, pain and general recovery from surgery until you feel well enough to go home. You will begin drinking fluids and the intravenous needle will be removed after you are fully awake and drinking well.

When you have recovered from the anaesthesia, you will go home after visiting nursing is arranged by the Community Care Access Centre Case Manager if needed. For your safety, you must have an adult take you home when you are discharged. The nurse will give you a prescription for pain control medication before you go home. Most people also get a prescription for thyroid medication. The nurse will remind you when to see your doctor again.

When you are home, the visiting nurse will teach you how to look after yourself, the incision and any drains you may have. Any sutures will be taken out by the visiting nurse after your doctor orders this. Steri-strips should be taken off in 3 to 5 days.

As you recover, you will be able to get back to your normal activities. When you have questions or concerns, you can talk to your visiting nurse.

## On a Surgical Unit

If you stay in the hospital overnight, you will go to a Surgical Unit. You will be watched closely there. In the morning, your intravenous will be taken out and you will go home after home care is arranged through the Community Care Access Centre Case Manager if needed.

If you have a drain in your neck you will be shown how to look after this and measure any drainage. This will be monitored by the visiting nurse. The visiting nurse will remove the drain at home or in a nurse clinic as ordered by your doctor. Any sutures will be taken out by the visiting nurse after your doctor orders this. Steri-strips should be taken off in 3 to 5 days.

## Medication

Before you go home, you will be given a prescription for medication for pain control. Take these when needed as directed by your doctor.

Most people will also need to take a daily thyroid pill.

Some patients need calcium pills or Tums<sup>®</sup> after a thyroid operation. These patients will also need to have their blood tested regularly to check the level of calcium in their blood.



## Diet

You can eat your normal diet when you go home.

## Activities

You may feel tired for 1 or 2 days. You can do all of your normal activities when you go home.

## When do I see my doctor again?

The nurse will give you a follow-up appointment with your doctor before you leave the hospital. If you do not get an appointment, call your doctor to arrange this after you are home.

## Call your doctor if you notice:

- increased swelling or redness in your incision
- redness
- increased temperature
- pain that does not get better
- tingling or numbness in your lips or fingers
- increased drainage from the drain



