

How to Call Your Surgeon

1. If it is urgent, go to your nearest Emergency Department or call 911.
2. If it not urgent, during clinic hours (M-F, 8am-4pm), call the Surgeon’s Office **807-468-9861 EXT.5020**. Messages will be checked frequently and a doctor will be asked to return your call.

Postoperative Appointment

If you have stitches, you will need to have them taken out at your postoperative visit 7-10 days after surgery.

Things NOT to do:

- Do not drive until you have a good range of motion to your neck.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 15 pounds.
- Do not do any strenuous activity/exercising until your doctor says it’s OK.
- Avoid straining with bowel movements – you may need to get an over the counter stool softener.
- Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen products (Motrin, Aleve, Excedrin, Midol, Naprosyn) or any other medications that make you bleed easily one week before surgery and one week after surgery. If you are uncertain call your pharmacist or the nurse.
- Avoid direct sunlight to the area to avoid further scarring.

Our office personnel and your doctor are eager to support you through this process. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or problems. Call the surgeon’s office during office hours(M-F, 8am-4pm), if you have excessive bleeding, swelling, increased warmth or redness at the surgical site, drainage at the surgical site, fever greater than 38°C, severe pain not relieved by pain medication, continued nausea and vomiting, shortness of breath, tingling or cramps in your hands, feet or lips or any other concerns. If the surgeon’s office is closed, please go to the nearest Emergency Department.

Physician Name: _____ **Phone #:** _____

Follow-up Appt: _____

Additional discharge Instructions: _____

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THYROIDECTOMY

Did your doctor tell you that you have developed an infection related to your surgery?

If YES, please call the Infection Prevention Control office at LWDH.

(807) 468-9861 extension 2362

Thank you for helping us ensure quality care.

Incision

Keep the incision dry. You may use Q-tips or alcohol swabs. After washing, apply a thin film of an antibacterial ointment such as Polysporin. Apply the ointment 2 times a day. However, if your surgeon used skin glue - you may shower right away, and you do not need to use the antibiotic ointment. Please avoid activity that pulls the incision, such as shaving, for at least 2 weeks. The rest of the face may be shaved. The staples and/or stitches will be taken out 1-2 weeks after surgery at your postoperative appointment in the General Surgery Clinic.

Head of Bed

Please raise the head of your bed 30-45 degrees or sleep in a recliner for the first 3-4 days to decrease swelling. The skin above the incision may look swollen after lying down for a few hours.

Activity

No straining or heavy lifting. (no more than 15 pounds, approximately 7 kg)
No vigorous exercise for 2 weeks after surgery, unless cleared by your surgeon.

Diet

You may resume your regular diet right after surgery.

Pain

Your pain can be mild to moderate the first 24-48 hours. The pain usually lessens after that. Many patients complain more about a sore throat from the breathing tube used during surgery than about the surgery itself. Your pain will get better in 1-2 days and is best treated with throat lozenges.

You may not need strong narcotic pain medication. The sooner you reduce your narcotic pain medication use, the faster you will heal. As your pain lessens, try using extra-strength acetaminophen (Tylenol) instead of your narcotic pain med. It is best to reduce your pain to a level you can manage, rather than to get rid of the pain completely. Please start at a lower dose of narcotic pain med, and increase the dose only if the pain remains uncontrolled. Decrease the dose if the side effects are too severe.

Do not drive, operate dangerous machinery, or do anything dangerous if you are taking narcotic pain medication (such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc.). This medication affects your reflexes and responses, just like alcohol.

Shower and Bathing

You may shower 3 days after your surgery and you may bathe 2 weeks after surgery. When you shower, you can get the clear plastic bandage wet (it is water proof) or wash over the paper tapes with soap and water (they can get wet). Do not remove the small pieces of tape by yourself – they will fall off on their own in 5-7 days. If no paper tapes have been placed, the surgical adhesive is waterproof as well.

When to Call Your Surgeon

1. Any concerns. We would much rather that you call your surgeon than worry at home, or get into trouble.
2. Any numbness or tingling around your mouth, in your fingers or toes, or anywhere, this may be a sign of low blood calcium levels. If you have muscle cramping and/or curling of your fingers and toes, this could be even more seriously low blood calcium levels.
THIS CAN BE A LIFE THREATENING PROBLEM!
You must go have your blood calcium levels drawn immediately. You should not drive if you are having these symptoms. You need to have someone drive you to the nearest Emergency Room (ER) if possible. Have the ER staff call your surgeon after drawing your blood calcium and giving you extra calcium if needed. Bring these postoperative instructions with you to show the ER staff. If your blood calcium levels get too low, you could have seizures or your heart could stop, so you must take this seriously!
3. Fever over 38°C.
4. Foul smelling discharge from your incision.
5. Large amount of bleeding.
6. More than expected swelling of your neck.
7. Increase warmth or redness around the incision.
8. Problems urinating.
9. Pain that continues to increase instead of decrease.
10. Choking or coughing with food or liquid.