

Thyroidectomy

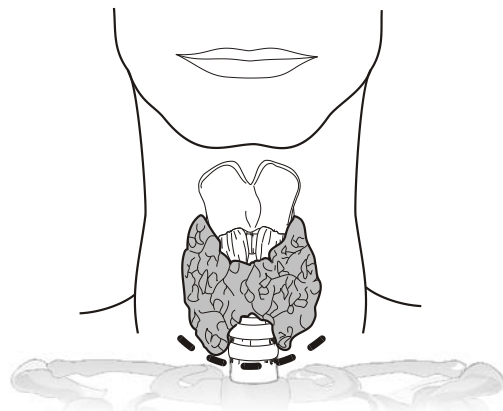
What is a Thyroidectomy

A Thyroidectomy is removal of the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland is a part of the body located in the front of the neck. It has 2 parts or lobes on either side of the trachea, or windpipe, which are connected by another piece of the gland called the isthmus.

The thyroid gland makes hormones which control the body's use of oxygen, the rate of metabolism - breaking down and using the energy from body substances such as fat to help the body to grow.

Types of thyroid surgery

1. **Partial Thyroid Lobectomy**
– removal of the upper or lower half of one lobe.
2. **Thyroid Lobectomy**
– removal of one lobe.
3. **Subtotal Thyroidectomy**
– removal of almost all of the thyroid gland, leaving a piece of one lobe.
4. **Total Thyroidectomy**
– removal of the whole thyroid gland.



What happens after surgery?

You are in the hospital for 1 to 2 days. You may have blood taken to test the level of calcium in your body. The level of calcium in your blood may be low or high due to the changing hormone levels.

Caring for yourself after surgery

What will I feel like?

- You will have an incision or cut on your lower neck. A bandage will cover the closed incision on your neck.
- You may have a small flexible tube called a drain sticking out of your neck. This tube drains fluid from the incision site. A nurse or doctor will remove the tube once there is little drainage from the incision site. If needed, you may need home care to help you with the drain.
- Because the nerve supply in the neck is located close to the thyroid gland, you may have a hoarse voice for a short time after surgery. Your voice will return to normal.
- As your body recovers from surgery.
- You may feel tired or weak because your thyroid is not there to produce the proper hormones. Your doctor will prescribe medications which replace the thyroid hormones and will help you have more energy. You may feel tired until your body becomes used to these medications.

Will I have pain?

- Your surgeon will prescribe pain medication for you. Take as directed. If the pain is not adequately controlled, please call your surgeon.
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What can I eat?

- To help prevent nausea and vomiting, start with fluids such as water and juice.
- Gradually return to your normal diet.

What activities can I do?

- Start slowly with daily activities. Do not lift any heavy objects, no more than 20 pounds or 9 kgs, for 2 to 3 weeks which may strain your neck muscles.
- You will not be able to drive for at least 1 week following surgery because the muscles in your neck will be very stiff.
- You may shower the next day. Remove the outer bandage. You may have metal clips or strips of tape over the incision. Do not remove the strips of tape. They will fall off on their own. The clips come out in about 1 week. Pat your neck dry with a towel, do not rub the incision.
- You may need help with daily activities when you get home. Talk with your family and friends before your surgery to arrange help with errands, shopping and cooking.

When can I return to work?

You will need to rest for 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery.
Please discuss with your surgeon when you can go back to work.

When should I call the surgeon?

Call your surgeon if you have:

- a fever of 38°C (100°F) or higher
 - increased bleeding through the bandage or dressing
 - increased swelling or redness at the incision site
 - pain that is not relieved with pain medication
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