



Parathyroid Surgery

What to expect and how to prepare

There are many ways to treat parathyroid disease. Your doctor will treat your condition with minimally invasive surgery.

How to Prepare for Your Operation

Things to Remember

- Do **not** take any aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting for 1 week before your operation. Two of these are ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). See attached sheet for more information.
- Do not shave any part of your body that you do not already shave every day. If you normally shave near your surgical site, do **not** shave that area for 2 days (48 hours) before your surgery.
- **You will need someone to drive you home from the hospital when you are discharged.**

24 Hours Before Your Operation

- **Take 2 showers:** Take 1 shower the night before, and a second shower the morning of your operation. Use the antibacterial soap your nurse gave you to wash your body.

Do **not** use the antibacterial soap on your face and hair. (See directions that came with the soap.) Use your own soap and shampoo on your face and hair. Use clean towels to dry off, and put on clean clothes.

- **Arrival time:** The pre-surgery nurse will call you by 5 p.m. the night before your operation. If you are having surgery on a Monday, the nurse will call you the Friday before. If you do not hear from the pre-surgery nurse by 5 p.m., please call **206-598-6334**.

The pre-surgery nurse will tell you when to come to the hospital and will remind you:

- Not to eat or drink after a certain time.
- Which of your regular medicines to take or not take.
- To sip only enough water to swallow your pills.

Remember:

Do not take any aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting for 2 weeks before your operation.

- **Heating blanket:** To reduce your risk of infection, you will be covered with a heating blanket to warm your body while you wait to go into the operating room. Ask for a heating blanket if you do not receive one.

What to Expect After Surgery

Precautions

Medicine given to you during and after your operation will affect you. For 24 hours after your surgery, do **not**:

- Drive or travel alone
- Use machinery
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any legal papers
- Be responsible for the care of another person

Incision Care

You will have an incision across the lower part of your neck. It will be closed with sutures (stitches). Keep your incision clean. If *Steri-Strips* (narrow pieces of tape) are used to cover your incision, leave them in place for 1 week. Your sutures will be removed in 7 to 10 days in clinic.

To help lessen swelling, sleep with your head raised at least 45 degrees. You can do this by propping up your head and neck on 3 pillows.

Showering

You may take a shower 2 days after your operation. Do **not** remove the *Steri-Strips* over your incision. After you shower, pat your incision dry and leave it open to the air.

Pain Management

Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) or the pain medicine your doctor prescribed to ease your pain. You can also apply ice to the incision area to help lessen any swelling. Wrap the ice in a towel or cloth to protect your skin.

Symptoms of Low Calcium

After your operation, your blood-calcium level may be low for a short time. Take Tums or Viactiv Calcium Soft Chews Plus Vitamins D & K as you were instructed.

If you have any twitching, or if you have tingling around your mouth or in your fingertips or toes, take an extra dose of 2 or 3 Tums tablets or Viactiv chews.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Appointments: Call Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery Center, 206-598-4022.

Established patients with questions about your treatment plan: Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Nurse Voice Mail Line, 206-598-7535.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206-598-6190 and ask for the Otolaryngology resident on call to be paged.

If your symptoms still do not lessen after you have taken 10 Extra Strength (500 mg) Tums tablets or Viactiv chews in 24 hours, call one of the phone numbers in the “Questions” box on this page.

Activity and Work

- After your operation, your neck may be stiff.
- Do **not** drive until you are no longer taking narcotic pain medicine and you can turn your head without pain.
- Most people take 1 to 2 weeks off work to recover.

Call the Nurse Advice Line or Your Doctor If You Have:

- Trouble breathing
- Severe swelling of your neck
- Trouble swallowing
- Bleeding or drainage that soaks your dressing
- A fever higher than 101.5°F (38.6°C)
- Shaking and chills
- Any sign of infection in your incision:
 - Redness
 - Increasing pain
 - Swelling
 - Foul-smelling drainage
 - A change in the type or amount of drainage
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Tingling around your mouth, fingertips, or toes
- Muscle twitching
- Concerns that cannot wait until your follow-up visit

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