

Austin Thyroid Surgeons
Thyroid and Parathyroid Specialists

Bridget M. Brady, MD 512-887-3187
Please call Dr. Brady's Office if you have
any questions or concerns.

For General Information, please visit her
website at www.TexasThyroidDoctor.com

POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THYROID AND PARATHYROID SURGERIES

Take Calcium (chewable Tums are fine) 750mg or 1000mg tablets every 8 hours for the first week, then every 12 hours for the second week and once a day for the third week after surgery. The parathyroid glands are very sensitive and may take time to recover from the stress of surgery. Since they balance calcium levels in the body, it is not uncommon for the body calcium levels to drop afterwards. If you experience any numbness or tingling of the fingers, toes or around the mouth, please notify Dr. Brady immediately. In addition to calcium daily, Dr. Brady may also give a prescription for calcitriol or rocaltrol which is a form of Vitamin D that helps the body absorb the extra calcium.

There are white strips on the neck called steri-strips that usually stay on for 10-14 days. Leave the strips in place if possible and Dr. Brady will remove them at the post operative visit. The stitches are all absorbable so there are none to take out. You can shower the day following thyroid or parathyroid surgery, and let the water and soap run over the incision as it is fine to get wet. Please apply ice packs to the wound on the neck as tolerated for the first 48 hours after the surgery. It is fine to sleep in a bed after the surgery, just try to rest on 2 pillows for the first 48 hours to minimize swelling.

Patients can drive when they are not taking the narcotic medications and may return to work or full activity when they feel ready. This is typically about 1-2 weeks. Please limit lifting more than 10 lbs or any strenuous exercise for 10-14 days after surgery.

It is normal to have a sore throat (from the breathing tube) and a sensation of a "lump in the throat" after these procedures as the body fills with fluid where the thyroid or parathyroid glands were removed. Since Dr. Brady makes smaller incisions and has to retract muscles in the region to allow her to perform minimally invasive techniques, you may also feel a generalized soreness throughout the neck from positioning and retraction during the surgery. It is also normal to feel a hard area near the incision which is scar tissue. That should improve after several weeks. Patients can also have some hoarseness and voice fatigue after surgery lasting from a few days to even a few months. All of these symptoms will fade with time.

If the patient is taking thyroid replacement hormone, this can resume the day after surgery as before. Those patients not on thyroid hormone may start thyroid medication immediately or within a few weeks after a total thyroidectomy. After the thyroid is removed, thyroid hormone continues to circulate in the body for up to a few weeks. Those having a partial thyroid removal will likely not need thyroid medication after the operation, but Dr. Brady will recommend checking thyroid levels six weeks after the operation to be sure.