

# ENT Southlake

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## Thyroidectomy

### **What to expect:**

You will have a very sore throat for at least a week. We will provide pain and nausea meds to use as needed, but plan to take pain medication regularly. You can change to plain Tylenol as soon as you are able.

There is sometimes some nausea from the anesthesia which can last a day or so. Feel free to eat what you feel up to eating, but this may only be softer things for a few days. There will be some swelling around the incision, which will likely increase over a few days before starting to decrease. Keeping the head/neck elevated for 48 hours after surgery will help this.

### **Incision:**

There will be an incision on the front of the neck with a steri strip dressing over the top. Please leave this in place until your postop visit. We will go over wound care at that time.

### **What to watch for:**

Please let us know if there is any drainage from the incision, fever over 101, numbness/tingling in the fingers or around the mouth (this can be from calcium issues, take a Tums or other calcium supplement and give us a call).

Please let us know if you have any issues.

### **Risks:**

The most serious possible risks of thyroid surgery include:

1. bleeding in the hours right after surgery that could lead to acute respiratory distress;
2. injury to a recurrent laryngeal nerve that can cause temporary or permanent hoarseness, and possibly even acute respiratory distress in the very rare event that both nerves are injured;
3. damage to the parathyroid glands that control calcium levels in the blood, leading to temporary, or more rarely, permanent hypoparathyroidism and hypocalcemia.

**Activity:**

Recommend to limit extreme physical activities following surgery for a few days or weeks. This is primarily to reduce the risk of a postoperative neck hematoma (blood clot) and breaking of stitches in the wound closure. These limitations are brief, usually followed by a quick transition back to unrestricted activity. Normal activity can begin on the first postoperative day. Vigorous sports, such as swimming, and activities that include heavy lifting should be delayed for at least ten days to 2 weeks.

Please see the American Thyroid Association for further information

<https://www.thyroid.org/thyroid-surgery/>