



**MR. DAVID LEONG MBBS FRACS**  
**Endocrine and General Surgeon**  
**Thyroid | Parathyroid | Adrenal | Hernia | Gallbladder**  
Unit 1/45 Oxford Close, West Leederville  
Suite 115, Joondalup Health Campus Medical Centre  
Ph: 08 93888822 Fax: 08 93888833  
Email: [david@perthendocrinesurgery.com.au](mailto:david@perthendocrinesurgery.com.au)  
Provider: 435291WL

## POST TOTAL THYROIDECTOMY INFORMATION SHEET

### WOUND CARE

#### ***What do I do with the dressings?***

You will have steri-strips (sticky white bandaids) covering your wound. These will slowly lose their stickiness over a period of . You can allow the steri-strips to fall off after this time or if they remain in place they can be removed after 14 days from your surgery. We recommend using micropore tape over the wound (changing it every 2-3 days) after to help with scarring for at least 1 month after surgery.

#### ***When can I get the wound wet?***

You can shower immediately after the surgery, make sure to dry the wound well gently with a towel. It is advisable to avoid the wound becoming excessively wet and to avoid activities such as swimming or taking a bath for the first week after surgery

#### ***What happens with the sutures?***

Your sutures are completely dissolvable and hidden and do not need to be removed by a doctor or nurse.

#### ***What if I notice soft wound swelling?***

It is common the tissues immediately above the wound to swell in the early period after surgery, typically day 3 to 4 post operatively. This swelling is a normal wound healing process and will subside over time without any specific intervention. Sudden neck swelling often with bruising with difficulty breathing is an emergency and you will need to present to the emergency department.

### EXERCISE AND DRIVING

#### ***When can I drive?***

It is safe to drive post operatively when a patient can turn their neck comfortably such that they can see things around them on the road and are not requiring sedating pain medication such as tramadol, panadeine forte etc. This is commonly after two to three days post operatively.

#### ***When can I start exercising?***

It is recommended to avoid any strenuous activity for two weeks after your surgery. This includes heavy straining, lifting and the gym. Light exercise such as walking is very safe. You



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should also perform the simple neck exercises as described in the information pamphlet provided.

### ***When can I return to work?***

You will be given a medical clearance for two weeks after your surgery. If your work is not labour intensive involving heavy lifting and straining, you may return to work sooner than this if you wish to do so.

## **MEDICATIONS POST THYROIDECTOMY**

If you have had your entire thyroid removed (total thyroidectomy), you will be prescribed several new medications post operatively. One new medication is thyroid hormone replacement (some patients may be on this medication pre-operatively) and also often calcium (caltrate) and vitamin D replacement (rocaltrol). Calcium and vitamin D is often prescribed after total thyroidectomy as a precaution against blood calcium levels from becoming too low relating to parathyroid bruising which can occur after your entire thyroid has been removed. This is usually temporary as explained during the consent process. After discharge, you will be given blood test forms to be repeated at your nearest **blood collection centre**. You will be given instructions and contacted about how to adjust your medications if required after.

If you experience **tingling around your hands, feet or mouth or experience muscle cramps** please take **caltrate**. Take two tablets every 15 minutes until the symptoms go away. If the symptoms do not go away and you develop cramps, present to the nearest emergency department

**Your next blood test is to be done on the. \_\_\_\_\_ .**

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEDICATIONS TO TAKE (CROSS OFF IF NOT RELEVANT)**

### **THYROXINE (Levothyroxine)**

Please take \_\_\_\_\_ once a day in the morning.  
Take this 30 minutes before breakfast

### **CALTRATE (Calcium Carbonate 600mg tablets)**

Please take \_\_\_\_\_ tablets \_\_\_\_\_ times a day  
Take this after your meal



**ROCALTROL (Calcitriol 0.25mcg tablets)** This is NOT the same as over the counter normal vitamin D3 supplement. Please do not substitute this



Please take \_\_\_\_\_ tablets \_\_\_\_\_ times a day.

## NECK EXERCISES

### Stretching exercise after neck operation

Let's move slowly and fully at least three times a day.



1. Relax your shoulders and neck sufficiently.



2. Look down.



3. Turn your face to the right. 4. Turn your face to the left.  
(Be carefull not to move your shoulders.)



5. Incline your head to the right. 6. Incline your head to the left.



7. Turn your shoulders round and round.



8. Slowly raise your hands fully then lower them.