

Mr Simon Grodski

Postoperative Instructions

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PARATHYROIDECTOMY



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MONASH University
Endocrine Surgery Unit

PARATHYROIDECTOMY

Wound Care:

Your wound will be covered with tape, which should be left in place for about 2 weeks. The tape will be removed at your first postoperative visit. You may notice some dried blood under the tape but that is of no concern. You can wash and shower with the tape in place and even get it wet. Once removed, you can shower with the wound exposed. The tape can then be replaced each day for 4-6 weeks after surgery in order to get the best possible cosmetic result. The preferred tape is ½ inch, flesh coloured Micropore tape which can be obtained from your chemist. Once finished with taping, massaging vitamin E moisturiser cream into the wound will help soften the wound and improve healing.

Activities:

You should generally restrict vigorous activities for 1-2 weeks after surgery. There are no particular restrictions on lifting or general activities, common sense should guide you on returning to regular activities. Swimming should be avoided for at least 2 weeks after surgery. You can return to work and driving a car when you are moving freely and not requiring any pain medication.

Local symptoms:

A variety of local symptoms are common for several weeks after surgery including:

General tiredness. Tightness and swelling around the wound. A choking sensation and difficulty swallowing. Numbness of the skin above the wound.

Weakness of the voice with prolonged use. Headaches and neck stiffness (gentle neck exercises will help with this).

Constipation (especially if you are using stronger pain medication) and aperients (laxatives) may be needed if your bowels are not moving.

Occasionally a symptom may last for several months.

Late complications:

The only delayed complication of concern is wound infection. This may have occurred if the wound becomes very red, hot, painful and more swollen. You may or may not develop a fever. If this occurs, you must seek attention from your surgeon or your local doctor straight away to review the wound and arrange for you to have antibiotics.

Follow-up:

Generally, your follow-up will consist of:

- A post-operative visit 2-3 weeks after surgery to check your wound, review the pathology and check your overall progress. Typically, you will have been given a pathology request for blood tests to be done 2-3 days prior to this appointment. If an appointment was not

provided on discharge, please contact our rooms.

- A final surgical check-up at 6 months

In addition, you may need to see your endocrinologist for further follow up.

Country patients:

If you are unable to return to Melbourne for follow-up, it may be possible for the tape to be changed and for your follow-up to be undertaken by your local doctor. We would need to confirm these arrangements before you leave hospital.

Calcium supplements:

Your calcium levels will drop after successful parathyroidectomy. Occasionally you may develop symptoms of numbness and tingling in the fingers, toes and lips. Very occasionally more severe cramping (tetany) may occur. If symptoms develop then these can be alleviated by taking calcium supplements (eg. Caltrate) and/or a glass of milk. Calcium supplements can be obtained over the counter from your chemist. Take 1-2 tablets morning and night to alleviate symptoms. Please contact your surgeon or local doctor if symptoms are getting worse.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr Grodski as listed overleaf.