BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

Endocrine Surgery Unit / General Surgery
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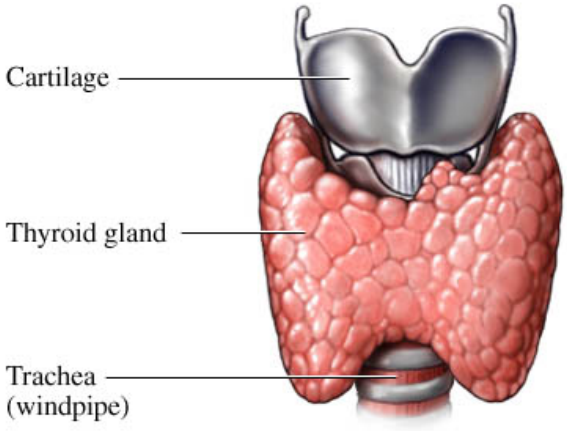
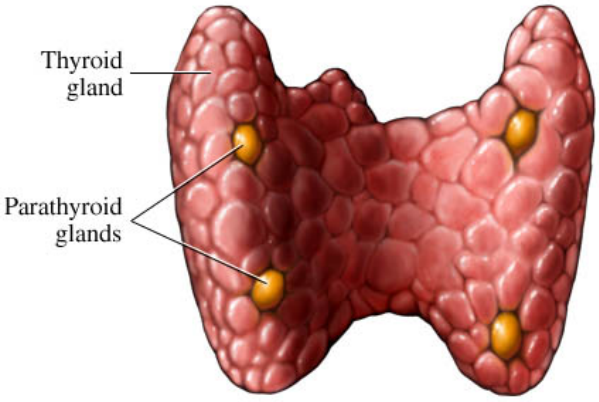
Thyroid Surgery Instructions

The thyroid gland is one of the largest endocrine glands. The thyroid gland is composed of two lobes positioned on either side of the trachea and joined by the isthmus. Thyroid hormones affect all tissues and organ systems in the body.

Thyroid – front view



Thyroid and Parathyroids – back view



Thyroidectomy is removal of the thyroid gland.

Operative time: usually 1 and ½ hours.

Anesthesia: General anesthesia is used.

Hospital stay: usually just overnight.

Preparing for Thyroid Surgery

1. Please inform your surgeon of any signs of cold, infection, or fevers that appear before surgery.
2. Do not eat or drink after midnight on the night before your operation.
3. If you take any prescription medications on a daily basis, take as specifically instructed by your surgeon and/or anesthesiologist.
4. To confirm your surgical time, please call 617-732-7625 between 3:30 and 6:30 p.m. on the business day prior to your surgery.

Day of Surgery

1. Come to the Admitting Office at the time specified.
2. You will be accompanied to the Pre-operative Area
3. Your family will be asked to wait in the surgical liaison area.

In Pre-operative Area

1. An intravenous line (IV) will be started.
2. You will meet the anesthesiologist
3. You will be given sedation.
4. You will be brought to the operating room and given general anesthesia.

After Surgery

1. You will wake up in the recovery room and stay for about 2 hours. When ready, you will be transferred to your hospital room.
2. The incision is closed with sutures that dissolve and will be covered by a plastic glue-like dressing called Dermabond.
3. Ask for pain medication if you are in pain.
4. You will continue with intravenous fluids until you are taking adequate fluids orally.
5. Your diet will be advanced from liquids to solid food as tolerated.
6. You will be given your regular medications as well as our post-operative medications (calcium, vitamin D, and thyroid hormone).
7. You will be encouraged to get out of bed and walk.

Day After Surgery

1. You may have a regular breakfast, if desired.
2. You will have a calcium level checked.
3. You should start doing range of motion exercises for your neck. You should do these exercises four times a day for five minutes until your neck mobility is back to normal.
    a. Flex your head forward, left and right
    b. Turn your head from side to side
4. You will usually be ready to go home by early afternoon; occasionally, depending on your calcium level, we may ask to keep you until evening.
5. Someone must escort you home. You will not be able to drive yourself.
6. You will be given a prescription for narcotic pain medication at discharge. This is usually Percocet (oxycodone) or Dilaudid (hydromorphone).

Discharge Instructions

The nurse will call you within 24-48 hours after your discharge to review discharge instructions (including medications). Should you have an urgent matter outside of office hours (8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. M-F), please call 617-732-6660 and have your surgeon paged.

Pain: For pain, take ibuprofen or Tylenol as your first measure. For more severe pain, take the narcotic pain medication as needed and according to the prescription.

Incision Care: The Dermabond wound sealant is waterproof. You may shower, use soap, and pat it dry. Do not use lotions on the incision – lotions will dissolve the coating. After several weeks, it will begin to flake off.

Activity: No restrictions. Driving is permitted once you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication and have good neck mobility.

Diet: No restrictions.

Follow up visits:

1. You will follow up in the office 2-4 weeks after surgery. Please call the office if you do not have this appointment already scheduled.

Please call the office with any questions 617-732-6830.

IMPORTANT: POST-OP LAB ORDER
DO NOT DISCARD!

Dear Patient:

The following is your first calcium blood draw order. The office nurse will contact you following surgery to schedule an outpatient calcium draw as needed.

Patient: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Date of Blood Draw: _____

Diagnosis: ICD-9 code

Dr. Daniel T. Ruan

NPI #: 1285711275

Signature: _____

Please draw a *stat* serum calcium level on the patient listed above and fax the results to Dr. Ruan at 617-739-1728

Please call 617-732-6830 with any questions.