



Thyroid and Thyroidectomy

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland located at the base of the neck, in front of the trachea. It produces hormones that regulate metabolism, heart rate, temperature, and other vital functions. Disorders of the thyroid gland, such as nodules, goiters, hyperthyroidism, or thyroid cancer, may require surgical removal of part or all of the gland.

Thyroidectomy is the surgical removal of all or part of the thyroid gland. The procedure can be total (removing the entire thyroid) or partial (removing one lobe or a portion of the gland). The procedure is done under general anesthesia and may take 1-3 hours depending on the complexity. Patients may be observed overnight in the surgical facility but often are able to go home the same day.

Pre-Operative Instructions

- **Fasting:**
 - Avoid eating or drinking after midnight the night before surgery.
- **Medications:**
 - You will likely need to stop taking blood thinners, weight loss medications and some diabetes medications, consult with your doctor. See attached for general recommendations.
 - Take all prescribed medications with a small sip of water as instructed, including any thyroid medications or calcium.
- **Health Status:**
 - Notify your doctor if you have any symptoms of cold, flu, or respiratory infection.
 - Inform your doctor of any allergies, especially to sedatives or anesthetics.
- **Day of Surgery:**
 - Arrive at the hospital or surgical center as instructed.
 - Wear comfortable clothing and remove jewelry and contact lenses.
 - Arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home after the procedure, as you will not be able to drive yourself.

Viewmont Surgery Center -- 50 13th Avenue NE Hickory, NC 28601 [\(828\) 624-1250](tel:8286241250)
www.viewmontsurgerycenter.com

Catawba Valley Medical Center -- 810 Fairgrove Church Rd, Hickory, NC [\(828\) 326-3000](tel:8283263000)
www.catawbavalleyhealth.org

Frye Regional Medical Center-- 420 N Center St, Hickory, NC 28601 [\(828\) 315-5000](tel:8283155000)
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Post-Operative Instructions

- **Medications:**
 - Take prescribed thyroid hormone replacement (levothyroxine) if a total thyroidectomy was performed.
 - Calcium and vitamin D supplements may be necessary. If recommended a typical dose is Calcium Citrate (315mg with Vitamin D). Two tablets three times daily. *Example: 2 tablets at 8am, 2 tablets at 2pm, 2 tablets at 8pm.*
 - You may be prescribed antibiotics and pain medication after the procedure. Many patients only take acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Motrin) alternating doses every 3 hours. *Ex: Tylenol 500mg at 8am, Motrin 600mg at 11am, Tylenol 500mg at 2pm, Motrin 600mg at 5pm, etc.* The first home dose should be timed according to last known dose received at surgical facility.
- **Activity:**
 - Rest for the first 24 hours after surgery.
 - Gradually resume normal activities as tolerated.
 - Avoid strenuous activities and heavy lifting for at least 1-2 weeks.
- **Diet:**
 - Resume a normal diet as soon as you feel able but start with soft foods to avoid discomfort while swallowing.
- **Wound Care:**
 - Keep the surgical site clean and dry.
 - You may shower after 24-48 hours but avoid soaking the incision.
 - Report any signs of infection (redness, swelling, or discharge) to your doctor.
- **Voice Care:**
 - Temporary hoarseness or voice changes may occur due to irritation of the vocal cords.
 - Avoid straining your voice during the recovery period.
- **Follow-Up:**
 - Follow up with your surgeon as scheduled. You may need repeat blood tests to monitor thyroid function and calcium levels.
- **Emergency Situations:**
 - If you experience severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, severe numbness or tingling in your mouth, hands, feet or fingertips, significant swelling or bleeding from the incision, seek immediate medical attention.

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