

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

HEMITHYROIDECTOMY

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What can I expect after the operation?

- The **incision** for this operation is usually 5-6cm and is placed in a skin crease in the lower neck
- You may have a **drain** coming out of the neck to collect excess fluid. If used, this drain is usually removed the day after the operation
- You will generally be in hospital **overnight only**. When the drain is removed you can go home
- It is not a particularly painful operation.

What are the risks of the operation?

- General risks of any operation- bleeding, infection, presence of a scar
 - The risk of bleeding is greatest in the first 24 hours hence why you are observed overnight in the hospital
- Recurrent laryngeal nerve weakness. This nerve supplies one half of the voice box (larynx). It is responsible for movement of the vocal cord on that side. Injury to this nerve causes a weak or hoarse voice. It is usually temporary but may be permanent. It is my routine practice to assess the vocal cord function before and after surgery.
- Removal of half of the thyroid does not place the parathyroid (calcium) glands at risk. However if you have had the other removed previously then they can be at risk and calcium levels will be monitored after the operation in these cases.

What should I do after leaving the hospital?

- Keep the incision dry for 72 hours. After that time you can get it wet and get soap running over it in the shower. Pat it dry with a towel
- Avoid strenuous exercise in the first two weeks after the operation
- You can recommence a normal diet immediately.

What do I need to look out for when I'm at home?

- Any swelling in the region of the operation
- Any redness over the wound that is also hot may indicate the presence of a wound infection. This is rare however
- Read the scar management information sheet available on the website: **www.ForemanENT.com.au** (under 'Patient Information')
- About 30% of patients having half of the thyroid removed will need to take thyroid replacement at some stage in the future

When do I have follow-up?

- Your first appointment will generally be 1 week after surgery
- This appointment allows me to assess the incision, remove any sutures and also the pathology from the operation will be available for us to discuss
- I will also perform nasoendoscopy again to assess the function of the vocal cords

If you have any problems please contact me on 0413 310 971 or 7200 2539.
Please note the mobile number is **only** for use during the post-operative period



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