

Lake County ENT/Head & Neck Specialists

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Post-operative Instructions following Neck Dissection/Neck Mass Excision

General: Neck dissection and excision of neck mass procedures are performed to remove malignant and benign tumors, abnormal/malignant lymph nodes or congenital cysts. You may be hospitalized for one or two nights following your procedure. A small plastic drain may be placed in the neck to prevent accumulation of blood under the skin flap following surgery. You should avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen (Excedrin, Motrin, Naprosyn, Advil) for 10 days prior to the surgery. These drugs are mild blood thinners and will increase your chances of bleeding.

Diet: Unless otherwise directed, you may have liquids by mouth once you have awakened from anesthesia. If you tolerate the liquids without significant nausea or vomiting then you may take solid foods without restrictions. Generally patients experience a mild sore throat for 2-3 days following neck surgery. This usually does not interfere with swallowing.

Pain Control: Patients report moderate neck pain for several days following neck dissection or neck mass excision. This is usually well controlled with prescription strength oral pain medications (Vicodin®). Please take the pain medication prescribed by your surgeon when needed. You should avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen (Excedrin®, Motrin®, Naprosyn®, Advil®) because these drugs are mild blood thinners and will increase your chances of bleeding into the neck tissues or neck wound.

Activity: Sleep with the head elevated for the first 48 hours. You may use two pillows to do this or sleep in a reclining chair. Gentle rotation, flexion and extension of the head and neck is permitted. No heavy lifting or straining for 2 weeks following the surgery. You should plan for 1 week away from work. If your job requires manual labor, lifting or straining then you should be out of work for 2 weeks or limited to light duty until the 2 week mark.

Wound Care: Do not wash or manipulate the neck wound for 48 hours following the surgery. The neck dressing (if applied) will be removed on the morning following your surgery. Mild redness and swelling around the wound is normal and will decrease over the 2 weeks following surgery. If a drain has been placed, it will be removed the day after surgery. Once you are home, apply a thin layer of the Vaseline to the wound 3 times daily. You may shower and allow the wound to get wet 48 hours following the surgery. Allow soap and water to run over the wound. Do not scrub or manipulate the wound for 7 days. Pat the area dry; don't rub it with a towel. After 7 days you may gently lather the wound with soap and water.

Please call our office immediately if you experience:

- *Difficulty breathing or swallowing
- *Neck swelling
- *Bleeding from the wound
- *Fever greater than 101 degrees Fahrenheit
- *Pus coming from the wound
- *Increasing redness around the wound