

Thyroid Post Surgery FAQs

Q: Why do I need to take calcium and vitamin D supplements after thyroid or parathyroid surgery?

A: The parathyroid glands control the calcium level in your body. If you have an overactive parathyroid gland, the other parathyroid glands may not be working properly; this will cause your calcium level to be low after surgery to remove the hyperactive parathyroid. This is called Hypocalcemia, and is treated with Calcium and Vitamin D supplements.

Also, when we surgically remove part, or all, of the thyroid, we may remove the parathyroid glands as well. This will cause hypocalcemia.

Q: How long do I need to take Calcium and Vitamin D supplements after thyroid or parathyroid surgery?

A: Generally at least 6 weeks. Your primary care doctor will check your calcium levels and will determine how long you need to be on calcium and vitamin D supplements. This is many times temporary after surgery, but may be permanent.

Q: What should I do if I have swelling in my neck after I had neck surgery?

A: Some swelling is expected. Sleeping with your head and chest elevated (on 2-3 pillows) and not lying flat on your back will allow gravity to help decrease the swelling. If you are having difficulty breathing or swallowing or if the swelling is increasing you should call our office, and you will need to go to the Emergency room promptly for evaluation and treatment.

Q: If I have cancer, will I need chemotherapy?

A: This depends on the type of cancer. If you are found to have cancer, you will be referred to an oncologist (a cancer specialist) who will determine the need for chemotherapy or other treatment options.