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SINUS  
ENDOCRINE  
HEAD AND NECK CANCER  
VOICE DISORDERS  
SALIVARY GLANDS  
TONSILS AND ADENOIDS  
EARS  
PEDIATRICS  
SNORING / SLEEP APNEA

## Parathyroidectomy

If you have been referred to us by your primary care physician, the following may be a review for you. We start with a discussion of an elevated level of calcium in the blood, which is called hypercalcemia.

What cause hypercalcemia? There are several possible causes:

- Too much calcium in nutrition
- Medical conditions like sarcoidosis
- An overactive parathyroid gland
- Cancer

What does it feel like to have hypercalcemia? There are no signs or symptoms outwardly. It is silent like high blood pressure. However, if it is left untreated it can lead to:

- Osteoporosis
- Kidney stones
- General malaise and fatigue
- Pancreatitis
- Peptic (stomach) ulcers
- Frequent urination

How do I know if I have too much calcium in my blood? Your primary care physician can order a blood test.

What treatments are available? Your primary care physician will most likely refer you to an endocrinologist, a doctor that specializes in hormonal (gland) disorders. The treatment of choice depends on the cause. If the cause is an overactive parathyroid gland it will need to be removed, and thus you are referred to The Head+Neck Center.

What is a parathyroid gland? We have four tiny parathyroid glands located within the thyroid that secrete a hormone to regulate calcium. This hormone, which can be measured in the blood, is called parathormone (PTH). If the PTH level is elevated, one has hyperparathyroidism.

## KNOWN RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

### Surgery

The surgery is called parathyroidectomy (excision of a parathyroid gland). The procedure is done under general anesthesia and takes about an hour. Patients stay one night in the hospital to be sure that swallowing, breathing and talking are all ok. The incision falls in a natural skin crease in your neck that is barely visible after it heals.

For more information about parathyroid surgery, please see our patient teaching instruction sheet on parathyroidectomy. Please call on any of us at any time to assist you with this information. We are all here to help in any way we can..

When you call the hospital on the business day before the procedure you will be given an arrival time that will be about an hour prior to the procedure. Upon your arrival at the hospital you will talk with a nurse (who will also start an IV), an anesthesiologist and your surgeon before the procedure. Your surgeon will take care to place the incision along a natural skin crease to minimize any scarring.

## PREOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>Food and Drink</b>	Nothing to eat or drink after midnight the evening before your procedure. This includes all foods, liquids, water, candy, mints or gum. You may brush your teeth. Your procedure will be cancelled if you do not follow these instructions.
<b>Medications</b>	Please notify us of any medications and the dosage, including insulin or allergies you may have. If you take routine medications, please take them as directed with just a sip of water in the a.m. If you are on any medications that affect bleeding (such as Coumadin or Warfarin) please notify the office immediately.
<b>What to Avoid</b>	Please avoid any aspirin, aspirin-containing products or ibuprofen (Advil®, Vitamin E, Aleve®, etc.) for one week prior to your surgery.
<b>Do Not Bring</b>	Do not bring valuables, (cash, credit cards, watches, jewelry, etc.) to the hospital. Upon your arrival you will be given a bag for your belongings. These will be given to your family to take to the unit where you will be admitted postoperatively.
<b>Remove</b>	Please remove all make-up, nail polish and false nails before surgery. This will help your surgical team evaluate the blood oxygen during your procedure.
<b>Confirm Arrival</b>	Please call the hospital the business day prior to your procedure to confirm your arrival time.

## POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>Drainage</b>	Following surgery you will have a soft drain in the surgical incision. The drain will be removed in the morning prior to your discharge. Removal of this drain has been described by most patients as discomfort rather than pain. You will most likely experience some neck stiffness and discomfort that should be well managed by your pain medications. If there is excessive swelling, steroids will be prescribed to minimize the swelling. You will go home with Steri-strips along the incision line, which must be kept dry to remain in place.
<b>Discharge Criteria</b>	Prior to your hospital discharge, the nurse will assist you to meet the discharge criteria: to drink liquids, walk with a steady gait, manage your discomfort and to have any drainage under control. You will be asked to come to the clinic for a two week postoperative appointment.
<b>Diet</b>	Advance diet from liquids to soft foods to solids as tolerated. Avoid hot liquids or food.
<b>Medications</b>	You will be given a prescription for pain medication at your pre-operative appointment. Use the pain medication for the first few days. After that acetaminophen or ibuprofen may be used according to package directions. You will be given an antibiotic prescription at your appointment as well. It is important that you complete the antibiotic as prescribed.
<b>Activity</b>	No heavy lifting, bending or straining for two weeks following surgery.
<b>Wound Care</b>	You will have Steri-strips over your incision. It is important to keep these dry. You may shower and wash your hair if you cover the Steri-strips with clear plastic wrap. Make a window over the Steri-strips and tape around the edges of the plastic wrap.
<b>Calcium Supplements</b>	Patients who have parathyroid surgery may be required to take calcium supplements to restore blood calcium after surgery. Soon after your surgery you will be asked to follow-up with your primary care physician regarding medication, including repeat laboratory tests of hormone and calcium blood levels.
<b>Please Call for</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty breathing or painful swallowing</li><li>• Coughing up blood or persistent bleeding (you may notice some slight blood-tinged sputum which is not uncommon)</li></ul>

- Significant swelling of the neck or back of throat
- Pain unrelieved by your prescribed pain medication

#### Appointments

Your first follow-up appointment in the office will be scheduled for two weeks postoperatively. Immediately following that appointment you will be asked to go to the lab (to check your parathormone and calcium levels). If you did not make an appointment before surgery for this appointment, please call the office at (585) 256-3550 to schedule one.

#### Results

Depending on the final diagnosis of the gland removed, follow-up by your primary care physician, endocrinologist and/or surgeon may be indicated. Please call the office after 10 days if you have not heard the pathology results or to make a follow-up plan.

#### Questions?

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call on us at (585) 256-3550 and ask for our nurse. We are all here to assist you in any way we can.

#### Emergencies

If you have an emergency after hours or on the weekend please call our professional answering service at (585) 258-4840.