



# CommunityENT

EAR • NOSE • THROAT • ALLERGY

Dr. Brian Hawkins, Dr. Joseph Creely and Jocelyn Jones PA-C  
4950 Norton Healthcare Blvd Suite 209. Louisville, KY 40241  
Phone (502)425-5556  
[www.communityent.com](http://www.communityent.com)

## Parathyroidectomy Post Operative Instructions

### What does your parathyroid do?

The parathyroid glands are located on the back surface of the thyroid gland. There are usually four parathyroid glands. A normal parathyroid gland is the size of a corn kernel. The parathyroid glands regulate calcium metabolism in your body. If one of the parathyroid glands starts to malfunction, this is called primary hyperparathyroidism. Your calcium and parathyroid levels could go up and you could experience symptoms. Some of the most common symptoms of a primary hyperparathyroidism are: fatigue, muscle aches and pains, anxiety, depression, kidney stones, osteoporosis issues etc. The most common reason to do a parathyroidectomy is because of one single gland producing too much parathyroid hormone, this is called a parathyroid adenoma. A parathyroid adenoma is a non-cancerous tumor of the parathyroid glands. In rare cases, all of the glands can become enlarged.

### What happens during parathyroidectomy surgery?

You will be asleep under general anesthesia. The surgeon will make an incision on your neck and expose the thyroid gland. The surgeon will rotate the thyroid gland according to where the parathyroid adenoma is located. Typically, this is identified in imaging studies done prior to your surgery.

In our experience the cosmetic outcome is the same for all closure methods. This surgery is normally out-patient. Your physician will discuss with you if an overnight stay is necessary.

### What are the possible complications of thyroid surgery?

There are always risks with general anesthesia.  
There is a risk of bleeding and wound infection.

There is a risk that the wound will not heal well causing a cosmetic deformity. There is a risk of hematoma. This is when a large blood clot forms in the surgical cavity after surgery. If you experience any neck swelling you should call the office immediately.

There is a nerve that controls your voice and your ability to close your vocal cords when swallowing. This is called the recurrent laryngeal nerve. This nerve runs very close to the thyroid and if injured it can cause temporary or permanent paralysis of the nerve. We tediously dissect out the nerve in an effort to avoid this complication. The paralysis can cause trouble swallowing, choking, aspiration and changes in voice. In rare cases if bilateral paralysis happens, the patient may need a tracheotomy. There are other nerves in this area if injured could cause temporary/permanent changes in the pitch of your voice

Hypocalcemia is a risk of this surgery. When we remove an adenoma sometimes it can cause the other parathyroid glands to not function well temporarily. You may end up needing calcium supplement temporarily or permanently. Hypocalcemia can cause numbness, tingling, cramping, heart arrhythmias, mental status changes, spasms of the vocal cords etc.

### **How should I prepare for parathyroid surgery?**

You should discontinue any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for 7 days prior to the surgery. This will significantly reduce your bleeding risk. If you are on any blood thinners, you will need to consult with the surgeon and the prescribing physician on how to discontinue those medications before surgery.

Prepare to be off work for a few days after your parathyroid surgery. Strenuous occupations may require up to 10 days off.

### **What happens after surgery?**

After surgery you will be taken to recovery and monitored for symptoms of low calcium. If you do not have any symptoms, you may be discharged with an order to get your calcium level checked.

### **What should I do when I get home?**

You should rest and avoid picking up any heavy objects (nothing over 5-10lbs)

You can eat normally.

If you start having choking episodes when you eat, you need to call the office.

You will get a prescription for pain medication. If you are taking this medication you cannot drive a car and you may need assistance at home. If you notice you are running low on prescription pain medicine, please call the office and talk to one of our providers to see if a refill is appropriate. You can use Tylenol for pain.

**When is my follow-up?**

Typically the first follow up appointment is 7-14 days after surgery

**When should I call the office?**

Call the Office if:

- You develop a fever, have redness, swelling or increasing pain in the neck wound
- You are having difficulty breathing
- You have uncontrollable numbness/tingling around the mouth, spasms in your hand/feet, cramping, mental status changes or you feel your heart is not beating normally

Updated 1/2021