Discharge Instructions: Post Op Hemi- or Total Thyroidectomy

What To Expect
• Your neck will be sore for several days. You may be hoarse or have a sore throat for a few days.

Wound Care
• Your neck incision will be covered with Dermabond™ (skin glue), steri-strips (thin sticky strips placed across the wound to hold skin edges together), and Bacitracin® cream. You may also have a dressing.
• It is normal to have a small amount of oozing from the incision for the first 1-2 days. You may ooze reddish-colored fluid, especially if you take a blood thinner like aspirin, but you should not have fresh bleeding.
• Do not remove the Dermabond™ or the steri-strips.
• If only Bacitracin® cream is used, stop applying the cream after 2 days.

Pain Control
• We will provide you with a prescription for opioid pain medication such as hydrocodone with acetaminophen (Norco®). Take it every 4-6 hours if you need it, but you don’t have to use them if you are not having pain. If opioid medications are too strong, you can take acetaminophen (Tylenol®). You may take ibuprofen (Advil®/Motrin®) after the first 1-2 days. Follow the instructions on the bottle.
• If you take an opioid medication that contains acetaminophen, do not take more acetaminophen. The recommended maximum daily dose of acetaminophen is 3000 milligrams (mg). Check all medication labels. Acetaminophen is found in over-the-counter and prescription medications.

Restrictions
• Do not lift anything that weights more than 5 pounds and no strenuous activities for 3 weeks.
• Do not drive (or operate heavy machinery) if you are taking opioid pain medication.
• You can gradually return to your normal activities after 2 weeks, as tolerated.

Call Us If...
• your neck has swelling or your drain suddenly has increased output
• you are hoarse for more than a few days after surgery or have shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
• you have bleeding that does not stop after you put pressure on the area
• you develop severe, uncontrolled pain at the site of your surgery
• the area around the incision or biopsy site becomes inflamed or reddened
• you have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher

The Head and Neck Center is open Mon. – Fri, 8a.m. – 5 p.m. Phone: 716-845-8186. After hours, call Roswell Park at 716-845-2300. If it is determined you need to be seen, you may be asked to come to the Assessment and Treatment Center (ATC). The ATC is open 24/7 but you need a referral from your doctor (or the doctor on call). It is not a walk in clinic.