Parathyroidectomy and Kidney Disease
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What is a parathyroidectomy?
Parathyroidectomy is a surgical operation. The surgeon will make a small cut above your collarbone. The glands are in your neck, usually on the back of the thyroid gland.

A person usually has 4 parathyroid glands. The surgeon will take out all of the glands or may leave one.
What type of complications can happen with a parathyroidectomy?

Like any surgery, there are some risks with having general anesthesia (medication to put you to sleep). Talk about these risks with your doctor or nurse.

A second operation may be needed if the hyperparathyroidism is not corrected. Hyperparathyroidism is a condition in which one or more of the parathyroid glands works harder than normal. Sometimes not all of the parathyroid glands are found during the first operation.

It is normal for your blood calcium level to fall below normal 2-4 days after surgery. People with kidney disease may have low calcium levels for some time after surgery. A low level of calcium in the blood may cause numbness or tingling around the mouth, in the hands or feet, muscle spasms in the hands, or muscle cramps. If you have any of these symptoms, tell your nurse or doctor right away.

What are your questions?
Please ask. We are here to help you.
What do I need to think about after my surgery?

Controlling discomfort

• You can expect the usual effects of having been put to sleep. This may be nausea, sore throat, and feeling like you are in a dream. There are medicines to help you with some of these problems.

• Some of the very small muscles in your neck may be cut. When you are getting up from lying down, place your hands together behind your neck for support. This will protect your neck muscles from strain.

• If you hold yourself tense and do not move your shoulders, this will cause more soreness and stiffness. The nurse or physiotherapist can give you some exercises to try to help.

Meals

• Eating healthy food will help your incision heal.

• You may want to eat foods that are easier to swallow while your throat is sore.

• Follow any special diet that you have been given by your dietitian.
Activity

- You can get up and out of bed shortly after your surgery.
- Gentle deep breathing and coughing exercises will help keep your lungs free of infection.
- Walk as much as you can.
- Add to your activity every day. For example, add 5 minutes of walking every day.
- Go back to driving when you can turn your head easily.
- Do not lift more than 5 pounds for 2 weeks. This includes lifting children.
- Go back to sexual activity when you feel well enough (not for the first week).

How do I take care of my incision?

You may have a small drain (tube) in your incision. This drain will remove any blood or fluid that collects. It will be removed a day or two after surgery.

Your incision may have been closed with a stitch or stitches that absorb into your skin. These do not need to be removed. If you have stitches that are not absorbable they need to be removed at your follow-up appointment or by your family doctor.
You may also have tapes over the skin called Steri-strips™. After your surgery, do not get this area wet for 2 days. Two days after your surgery you may get the area wet when showering or bathing. Pat the incision dry; do not rub the area.

If you have Steri-strips™:

• You will notice that the edges of the Steri-strips™ start to curl up after about 5-7 days.
• After 7 days you can take them off by grasping the edge and removing it like a Band-Aid®.
• Once removed, wash the area twice a day. After each wash, apply Polysporin® ointment to the wound until your follow-up visit with the doctor.

Swelling around the incision is normal. This can go on for several weeks after the surgery. Most swelling should go down between 1-2 weeks after the surgery.

The incisions tend to look their worst between 2-6 weeks after the surgery. This swelling and redness of the incision will settle down over the next few weeks. It will take 3-6 months for the incision to completely heal. You should keep the incision out of direct sunlight for 1 year. Do this by covering the area with clothing or sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or greater.
Bloodwork

Blood levels of calcium and phosphorus will be checked regularly after surgery until your blood levels are within an acceptable range. This may be for a few days up to a few weeks.

After that, patients with kidney disease who are getting hemodialysis will have their calcium and phosphorus levels drawn every 6 weeks during hemodialysis. Patients getting peritoneal dialysis will have their calcium and phosphorus levels drawn in their local blood collection clinic. Your kidney doctor will decide how often you will need your blood calcium and phosphorus levels checked.

Medications

You may have to take calcium pills when you go home. You may also need a medicine called alfalcacidol (Brand name: ONE-ALPHA®). This is a form of Vitamin D and will help increase calcium.

Your kidney doctor will adjust the doses of these medications based on your calcium levels.

It is extremely important to take these medications as you are told by your doctor or nurse practitioner to maintain normal calcium levels.
Most cases of low calcium after surgery are temporary. Usually the calcium levels will return to normal within a few weeks or a few months after the surgery.

Symptoms of low calcium include tingling or numbness in the hands or feet and numbness around the mouth area.

*If you get symptoms of low calcium while at home, you should go to your nearest Emergency Department. Tell the nurse or doctor at the Emergency Department that you have had your parathyroid glands removed.

Tell your doctor or health care provider right away if you have:

› Muscle spasms or tingling in your mouth or limbs
› A fever
› Difficulty breathing
› Bleeding from the incision site
› Swelling at the site of the incision that is getting worse instead of better
Please show this chart to your community pharmacist(s) and doctor(s)

Valid as of: Date (YYYY/MM/DD)

Pharmacist name: ____________________________

Doctor name: ____________________________

Allergies: ____________________________

Medication Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Supper</th>
<th>Bed</th>
<th>Directions for use</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Calcium</td>
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<td>Alfacalcidol  (ONE-ALPHA®)</td>
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<td>Activated Vitamin D</td>
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<td>Calcium Supplement</td>
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<td>Tums® Extra Strength (elemental calcium)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:

• Try to take your medication(s) at the same time each day to help you remember.
• Make sure you or your community pharmacist keep this schedule up to date if your medications change.
• Avoid taking over the counter medications (e.g., cough and cold medicines) without first checking with your pharmacist or doctor.

Directions for use: ____________________________