

Thyroglossal Duct Cyst Surgery: Before and After My Procedure

What is a thyroglossal duct cyst?

A **thyroglossal duct cyst** is an abnormality in the thyroid gland that you can be born with. When the thyroid gland first forms in a baby in the womb, it begins at the base of the tongue and moves down the neck through a canal called the thyroglossal duct. This duct normally disappears once the thyroid reaches its final position in the neck. Sometimes, however, portions of the duct remain, leaving cavities or pockets called cysts. These cysts can fill with fluid or mucus and may enlarge if they become infected.

What are my instructions before surgery?

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet, drink plenty of water, and stay as physically active as possible before surgery. These activities will help prepare your body for surgery and heal better after surgery.
- Do not smoke or vape before surgery and do not use recreational drugs or alcohol.

What can I expect after surgery?

- Your neck will be tender for the first 72 hours. You may not feel like eating or drinking as much as usual.
- A small “straw-like” drain will be left in the incision after surgery and gauze will cover the drain to capture any fluids. The drain will be removed by your surgeon 24-48 hours after surgery.
- Your incision is typically closed with absorbable sutures or surgical glue. No suture will need to be removed. Your sutures or glue will typically dissolve by two weeks after surgery.

What can I eat and drink after surgery?

- Eat softer foods and drink more fluids than usual for the first 72 hours after surgery (or longer if your neck remains tender).
- Eat smaller, more frequent meals that are high in protein. Eating protein will help your body heal. Ideas on how to add protein to your diet can be found here: <http://michmed.org/AYqnn>.
- If you have been told to limit fluids by another doctor (for example, if you have a heart or kidney condition), please follow those instructions.

What activities can I do after surgery?

- Rest at home for the first 24-72 hours; limit physical activity during this time.
- Elevate your head with 1-2 pillows.
- Do not lift, strain, or do any strenuous activities or exercise that will increase heart rate or blood pressure for two weeks after surgery. Limiting physical activity will help minimize possible bleeding.
- Do not swim or go under water for one week after surgery.

How do I take care of my wound after surgery?

- Keep your incision uncovered while you are at home. If you leave the house, cover the area with a bandage temporarily.
- Do not use makeup, sunblock, or lotions for 2 weeks after surgery.
- Do not shave over the surgical area for 3 weeks after surgery. Use care when you begin shaving again because there may be numbness near the surgical site.
- Massage the incision site and use scar cream 4-6 weeks after surgery.
- Do not expose scars to the sun for at least six months. If you cannot avoid sun exposure, use a strong sunblock with SPF 30 or higher.

How do I manage my pain at home after surgery?

- You may have a sore throat after surgery. This is normal and will likely limit chewing.
- Take your pain medications as prescribed around the clock for the first 72 hours when the swelling is settling in.
- Swallowing will be easier 30 minutes after taking your pain medications.
- Use ice packs to help with pain if needed. Place ice pack in a cloth. Apply 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off during awake hours for the first 3 days.

What follow-up appointment(s) will I have after surgery?

- You will have a drain removal appointment with your doctor within 48 hours of surgery.
- After your drain removal appointment, your doctor will discuss any additional follow-up appointments that may be needed. Additional appointments can be done via video or in person.

When can I return to work?

- Typically, you will be off work for 1 week, depending on the type of work you do.
- If your job involves lifting greater than 10-20 pounds, plan to be off for 2 weeks.

When should I call the doctor?

- Call us if you experience any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever higher than 101 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Unable to tolerate drinking or swallowing
 - Persistent vomiting
 - Pain, pressure, or fullness in the neck not controlled by pain medications

What is the contact information?

- Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.:
 - Call (734) 936-8051 to speak to a staff member who will route your call to the correct team of nurses.
- After 4:30 p.m., weekends, or holidays:
 - Call (734) 936-6267 and ask for the Otolaryngology (ENT) resident on-call.

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