

## Parathyroidectomy

- A parathyroidectomy is the surgical removal of one or more parathyroid glands. This surgery is performed in order to normalize the blood calcium levels. The parathyroid glands are four small endocrine glands in the neck that produce parathyroid hormone. They are typically located on the posterior surface of the thyroid gland.
- Risks
  - Recurrent laryngeal nerve injury: This nerve controls your vocal cords and if injured you will have a hoarse voice. There is a 5% chance of temporary hoarseness (< 6 months) and a 1% chance of permanent hoarseness.
  - Hypocalcemia (low blood calcium): There is a 5% chance of temporary hypocalcemia and a 1% chance of permanent hypocalcemia requiring calcium, and possibly vitamin D supplementation.
- Most patients who have more than one parathyroid gland removed spend one night in the hospital after surgery. You may have a drain placed below your incision to help remove fluid that builds up after surgery and to monitor bleeding. The drain will likely be removed before you go home.
- You will likely have a scar after surgery. The incision is about 2 to 3 cm in length, and is placed in a normal skin crease to minimize scarring and visibility. Steri-strips will be placed on your wound and they can be removed 7-14 days following your surgery. There is no need to place any further dressing on your incision. You should use sunscreen or cover your wound to protect the incision from the sun.
- Your blood calcium will be checked the night of your surgery and in the morning following it as well. The majority of patients have a normal calcium level following surgery, but if your blood calcium level is low you may experience numbness around the mouth, tingling on your fingertips and/or muscle cramping. These symptoms are relieved by taking calcium supplements (Tums, Oscal, etc) and, if needed, vitamin D (Rocaltrol).
- The majority of patients experience minimal pain and only require Tylenol for a few days following a parathyroidectomy. Other pain medication may be taken as necessary.
- You can resume regular activity as tolerated. Walking outside, going up and down stairs and performing light activities are all encouraged. Avoid strenuous activity or lifting anything that weighs 25 pounds or more until you feel up to it. If you are feeling well and are not taking any pain medication, you may drive (usually the third or fourth day after surgery).