

GS19lite Total Thyroidectomy (for Thyrotoxicosis)

Expires end of December 2019

A more detailed version of this procedure specific information sheet is available. Please ask your health practitioner at Joondalup Health Campus for a copy.

Write questions or notes here:



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This document will give you information about a thyroidectomy. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is the thyroid gland?

The thyroid gland is a structure in your neck that produces a hormone called thyroxine, which regulates your body's metabolism. Sometimes this gland can become overactive. This is called thyrotoxicosis and can cause symptoms such as losing weight, sweatiness and eye problems.

What are the benefits of surgery?

You should no longer have any distressing symptoms.

Are there any alternatives to a total thyroidectomy?

Medication, such as carbimazole or propylthiouracil, can be used to control thyroid activity.

Radioactive iodine can also be used for some people.

It is possible to remove only part of the gland so that you continue to produce some thyroid hormones and do not need to start taking thyroxine tablets. However, you may need further treatment.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes 90 minutes to two hours.

Your surgeon will make a cut on your neck in the line of one of your skin creases and remove the thyroid gland (see figure 1).

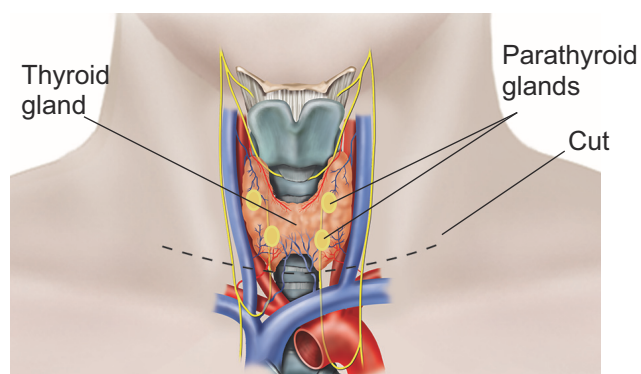


Figure 1

A thyroidectomy

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring
- Blood clots

2 Specific complications

- Bleeding
- Change in your voice
- Drop in calcium levels
- Drop in thyroid hormone levels
- Increase in thyroid hormone levels
- Breathing difficulties

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home after one to two days.

You should be able to return to work and normal activities after about two weeks.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

The healthcare team will usually arrange for you to come back to the clinic. Your surgeon will discuss with you any treatment or follow-up you need.

Summary

Thyrotoxicosis is a condition caused by an overactive thyroid gland. The symptoms can be distressing. A thyroidectomy to remove the gland is one of a number of ways thyrotoxicosis can be treated.

Acknowledgements

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