

**Patient
Information**

Hemi-thyroidectomy

Introduction

You have recently visited your GP with a swelling or lump in your neck or with symptoms that could mean your thyroid is not working correctly. An operation is needed to remove part of the thyroid gland to be sent the laboratory for testing in order to get a diagnosis. This leaflet gives you information about having surgery on your thyroid and the possible risks involved.

What is the thyroid gland?

The thyroid is a small gland in the front of the neck, just below the larynx (voice box). It is shaped a bit like a butterfly, being made up of 2 parts; the wings (lobes) with a central body (the isthmus). The function of the thyroid is to make hormones (thyroxine T4 and triiodothyronine T3) that keep the body working at its normal rate.

Diagnosis

As part of the process of getting a diagnosis, your consultant surgeon may need to remove part of the lobe. This is called a hemi-thyroidectomy (also known as a partial lobectomy). Cells that are removed from your thyroid gland will be sent to the laboratory where they will be looked at under a microscope to see if there are any cancerous cells.

About the operation

The operation will be performed under a general anaesthetic, so you will be asleep and unaware of the process. You will need to stay in hospital for 1 to 2 nights.

A small cut will be made at the front of your neck. The affected half of the thyroid gland will be removed and the cut will be closed. After the operation you will be given pain relief, such as paracetamol, which will help you feel more comfortable.

If you do not have any pain relief at home, please let your nurse know before you are discharged.

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Following the operation, a scar will form. The scar is usually in a natural fold in the skin and will fade over a few months. As the wound begins to heal, gently massaging it with a simple moisturising cream will help the scar to flatten and fade.

Risks

As with any operation, there is a small risk of bleeding or infection which can be treated with antibiotics. Due to the position of the thyroid gland, the nerves that control the voice box may be damaged during surgery. If the nerve does become damaged your voice may sound weak and hoarse but this is usually temporary.

Follow up

Your doctor will see you in the outpatient's clinic a few weeks after the operation. This will be when the results from the laboratory have been received.

The appointment details will be sent through the post after your discharge.

If a cancer diagnosis is confirmed, your doctor will explain what happens next and discuss further treatment with you.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Macmillan Head and Neck Clinical Nurse Specialists

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 6785

Monday to Thursday, 8:00am to 4:00pm,

Friday 8:00am to 1:00pm

Out of Hours - Ward 2b

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 6184

Please note that the Ward 2b contact number is only to be used out of normal working hours.

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Further information

Further information about the different types of thyroid cancer can be found in the Macmillan booklet 'Understanding thyroid cancer'.

Please ask a member of staff if you would like a copy of this leaflet. Alternatively, you can order a copy directly from Macmillan, free of charge.

You can also visit the following websites for more information.

British Thyroid Association

Tel: 01423 709707

Website: www.btf-thyroid.org

Macmillan

Freephone: 0808 808 0000

Website: www.macmillan.org.uk

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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85