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**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS
AFTER HEAD AND NECK SURGERY**

(Thyroid/parathyroid surgery, parotid gland surgery, and other head and neck surgery)

Dear Patient:

You are being discharged after what would be considered to be major surgery. We thoroughly understand that there is significant pain after this surgery and are sympathetic to what you feel. As such, we will attempt to decrease this pain with adequate medications. Furthermore, due to the extent of the surgery, the following is recommended for your postoperative care:

1. We strongly urge that you refrain from any heavy activity or going back to work for a period of at least 1-1/2 to 2 weeks.
2. During this time, light household activities can be performed without needing strict bed rest.
3. During this period, we recommend that you do not lift anything heavier than 15 pounds, as well as refrain from any moderate to heavy exercise.
4. Most importantly, during this period, listen to your body and take rest if you are tired. It is perfectly normal to feel very sleepy and tired, particularly, the first two to three days after surgery. Your strength and activity level will gradually improve over the course of the next two to four weeks.
5. After two weeks, you may go back to work. However, we recommend that you still avoid heavy physical manual labor at your work for a period of another two weeks.
6. The physician will generally remove any drains in your face and neck prior to discharging you to home. If this has not been done, you will be given a follow-up appointment in the office within 48 hours.
7. Please contact the office if you notice any sudden swelling at the incision site, any significant bleeding from the incision site itself, pus draining from the incision site, or any new onset progressive problems with breathing. If there is any indication of a fever, take the temperature and notify the office if it exceeds greater than 101.6 degrees Fahrenheit.
8. Generally, if the drains have been removed, we would like to see you back in our office for follow up and suture removal within 7 to 10 days.
9. Please take your pain medications regularly for discomfort as needed, particularly during the first week.
10. Diet is that of your choice--there are no particular restrictions.
11. During the first week after surgery, please avoid any aspirin or aspirin-containing products, any nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories, such as ibuprofen and Motrin, as this can cause bleeding.
12. Additional instructions for thyroid and parathyroid surgery patients: Please contact us if you notice any numbness or tingling of your face, around your lips, or of your hands that is progressing after discharge or within 48 hours after surgery. Furthermore, contact us if you notice any generalized cramps and spasms of your muscles within this time period.

Devang P. Desai, M.D.