

Thyroidectomy

Information for patients



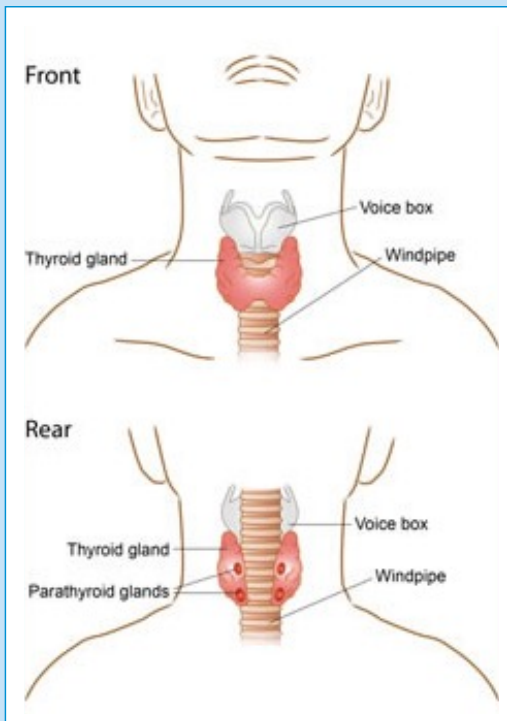
Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS's ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we all would like. It is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. We apologise for any delay and this document will provide you with more information on how you can support yourself while you are waiting.

What is a thyroidectomy?

A thyroidectomy is the removal of the thyroid gland. The thyroid is a gland that lies in front of the windpipe in your neck. It releases a hormone called thyroxine which helps to regulate the body's metabolism. This is needed for the cells in your body to work normally. The procedure will usually take between two and three hours.

Having a thyroidectomy is a major operation. This leaflet will provide guidance and signpost you to more information regarding this operation.



Guidance for patients

Some of the reasons for having a total thyroidectomy include:

- To remove lumps within the thyroid gland which may be non-cancerous or cancerous.
- An enlarged thyroid gland which can cause problems with breathing, voice change or swallowing.
- An overactive thyroid gland when anti-thyroid medication or radioactive iodine treatment is not suitable.

There are different types of thyroidectomy which may be offered to you. These include:

- Parathyroidectomy – this is where only the affected of the four parathyroid glands are removed.
- Hemithyroidectomy – this is the removal of half of the thyroid gland.

Further information about your procedure can be found on the websites below:

- <https://inform-prod-lites.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Lites/UK/GS08/GS08.pdf>
- www.baets.org.uk/patients/
- www.btf-thyroid.org/thyroid-surgery-info
- <https://parathyroiduk.org/>

There are things you can do to prepare for surgery and improve your recovery. This video from the Royal College of Anaesthetists can provide some simple steps to help you:

- **Video: Fitter, better, sooner**
www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CUMpUwX0x4

How can I help manage my symptoms?

Please continue to take any medication that you have been prescribed for your condition, as well as any prescribed to manage your symptoms, such as pain.

It is important that whilst you are waiting for your surgery you remain as active and as medically fit as possible. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help to manage your symptoms.

Healthy eating can ensure our bodies have the nutrients for growth and repair. Stopping smoking can reduce complications and can also reduce the chance of developing thyroid eye disease.

Please see our general health guidance on how to stay healthy whilst you wait for your procedure at: www.myplannedcare.nhs.uk/mids/sherwood-forest.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your symptoms are worsening, please get in touch with the general surgery outpatients on 01623 622515.

Symptoms of concern would be:

- Difficulty breathing.
- Change in voice.
- Difficulty swallowing.
- Increase in neck swelling.

If it is not possible to contact your GP immediately, phone your local out-of-hours service or call 111.

GP surgeries are still open

GP practice staff are also helping patients to manage their conditions at home while they wait for hospital appointments.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. They continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations.

Face to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it. When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP, or paramedic.

Urgent health advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life threatening emergencies

If you have severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains, please dial 999.

Consent and decision making

It is important that you are involved in decisions about your care. Consent is a patient's agreement for a health professional to provide care. You will be asked to sign a consent form to say you agree to have treatment and understand what it involves. You have a right to withdraw from treatment at any time, even after you have signed a form. It is your choice. Please ask as many questions as you like if you have any concerns.

Further information on consent please see www.nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment/.

Further support

The British Thyroid Foundation provides further information and support with:

- Psychological wellbeing to help manage symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and brain fog.
- Patient stories.
- Local support groups.
- Patient forums.

Please visit: www.btf-thyroid.org

YouTube: www.youtube.com/@BTFTthyroid/featured

Contact us

Please contact us on 01623 622515.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202501-02-THY
Created: January 2023 / Revised: January 2025 /
Review Date: January 2027