

# ABOUT YOUR NECK DISSECTION SURGERY

A neck dissection is the removal of lymph nodes in your neck that are or may become diseased.

## INCISION CARE

- If sutures or staples are still in place, clean the incision twice daily with hydrogen peroxide.
- If no drainage is present, clean with soap and water and apply antibiotic ointment if instructed to do so.
- After sutures/staples are removed, wash the area gently with mild soap with your daily bath/shower.

## NECK/SHOULDER CARE

Your neck and shoulder may be numb for an extended period of time. Take precautions to avoid injury to your skin.

- Do not use a hot water bottle or heating pad to this area. Use precaution with heat-producing appliances (i.e., hot rollers, hair dryers).
- Protect yourself from sunburn and extreme cold using protective covering and sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater).
- Use an electric razor to avoid cutting your skin.

## SHOULDER EXERCISES

- Shoulder and neck stiffness and discomfort may occur. The ability to move your affected arm(s) and shoulder will be evaluated when you return for your first post-op clinic appointment.
- You will be taught exercises that will help reduce this discomfort and increase your ability to move your shoulder.
- A warm, moist towel can be used before shoulder exercises and a cold compress afterward for the most comforting results.
- You are encouraged to gradually increase your activity level at home.
- You should walk frequently and move your affected arm(s) and shoulder to perform activities of daily living (i.e., combing hair, dressing, bathing).
- It is very important to move your arm/shoulder even though it may be uncomfortable.

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT FACIAL SWELLING

Some swelling of your face, especially around your eye(s) and jaw line, may persist until your body adjusts to the removal of lymph nodes and blood vessels.

- Swelling may be greater in the morning.
- You may also have a headache.
- Sleep with your head elevated on 2 or 3 pillows to reduce swelling and promote comfort.

## JP DRAIN CARE

You will have Jackson Pratt (JP) drains from your neck directly after surgery, and more than likely they will be taken out before you leave the hospital. If not, you will be instructed on care of these at home.

## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE OR THE ON-CALL STAFF IF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:

- Separation of the incision
- Increased redness or drainage from the suture line
- Increased facial or neck swelling
- Pain not relieved by prescribed medication
- Fever greater than 101.5

If you have any questions or problems and it is during office hours (8:00 am-5:00 pm, Monday-Friday), please call our nurse at 205-801-7801.

After hours and weekends, page the ENT resident on call at 205-934-3411.