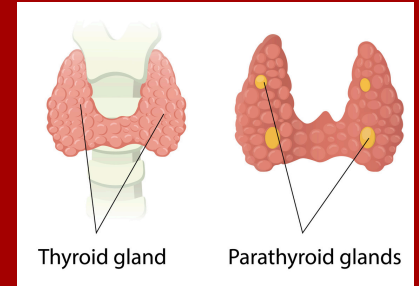




ROCHESTER  
GENERAL  
SURGERY



## What is the thyroid gland?

The thyroid is a gland in your neck. It produces thyroid hormone, which has multiple functions throughout the body including regulating your metabolism.

## What are the parathyroid glands?

You have four parathyroid glands located on the back side of the thyroid. They are responsible for regulating parathyroid hormone, which is involved in regulating calcium levels in the blood.

## Why may I need surgery?

Common indications for thyroid surgery include benign nodules or cysts large enough to cause compressive symptoms, cancer, thyrotoxicosis or overproduction of thyroid hormone, and goiter. The vast majority of patients requiring parathyroid surgery is an overproduction of parathyroid hormone causing high calcium levels in the blood. This is usually caused by a parathyroid adenoma, or one gland that produces too much hormone. Cancer of the parathyroid gland is another indication.

## How is the surgery performed?

For both thyroid and parathyroid surgery you will have an incision across the front of your neck about 3-4 inches long. If undergoing surgery for a parathyroid gland your doctor will first order studies to try and identify the one specific gland that is abnormal. The goal of parathyroid surgery is to remove only the abnormal gland. A parathyroid hormone level will be sent during the case to assure the correct gland is removed. Even with preoperative studies to localize the gland, finding it during surgery may be difficult and require extensive dissection in the neck and may even involve removal of a portion of the thyroid. A special tool to help identify the recurrent laryngeal nerve is used throughout the case to help identify the nerve and avoid injury. For thyroid surgery, depending on the indication, your doctor may only need to remove half of the thyroid gland or possibly the entire gland.

## What is expected after surgery?

If half of the thyroid gland is removed you will likely be able to go home same day as surgery. If the entire thyroid gland or parathyroid gland is removed you will need to stay in the hospital for close monitoring of your calcium level. You will likely go home the following day.

## What are the possible complications?

**A** minor complication can be a seroma, which is a build up of sterile fluid beneath the incision, and when left alone resorbs on its own. Major complications include recurrent laryngeal nerve injury which can lead to permanent vocal cord paralysis, bleeding, injury to the esophagus and trachea, hypoparathyroidism or thyrotoxic storm.

## What can I expect in the recovery period?

**S**ome pain can be expected. You will be given pain medication to manage this. You may have a hoarse voice for a time period. Bruising and swelling of the incision and neck is also normal. A globus sensation, or feeling like you have something stuck in your throat, can be expected for a period of time. You should avoid straining or heavy lifting, greater than 10lbs, for two weeks after surgery.

## How do I know if something is wrong?

If you have ongoing bleeding, redness, fever, drainage or significant pain not relieved by pain medication please call your surgeon. If you have difficulty swallowing, significant swelling of the neck or difficulty breathing seek immediate attention.