

SAN FRANCISCO OTOLARYNGOLOGY

Providing ear, nose, and throat care since 1940

NECK MASS EXCISIONS, LYMPH NODE BIOPSY, SUBMANDIBULAR GLAND EXCISION AND/OR THYROGLOSSAL DUCT EXCISION

INFECTION: Infection can occur from any surgery. It can require treatment with antibiotics and possibly surgical drainage.

NUMBNESS OF THE SKIN SURROUNDING THE INCISION SITE:

This is not a complication of the surgery but is a result of the incisions. This numbness usually decreases with time, but some degree of numbness can be permanent.

BLEEDING: This can occur after surgery, requiring packing or even the tying of blood vessels. Blood can also collect between the layers of tissue, requiring drainage.

INJURY TO THE VAGUS NERVE: This can occur as a complication when operating in the vicinity of the jugular vein. Injury to this nerve can result in paralysis of a vocal cord. A breathy voice, inefficient cough, and a sense of shortness of breath can result.

INJURY TO THE MARGINAL MANDIBULAR BRANCH OF THE FACIAL NERVE: Injury to this nerve can cause an obvious cosmetic deformity relating to asymmetry of motion of the corner of the mouth. It may also lead to difficulty in swallowing because of an inability to maintain lip closure during eating.

INJURY TO SPINAL ACCESSORY NERVE: Injury to this nerve can result in temporary or permanent pain, weakness, and shoulder dysfunction.

OTHER NERVE INJURIES: Injury to the hypoglossal nerve, which controls tongue movement, or to the superior laryngeal nerve, which provides sensation to the voice box, are rare potential complications which can result in difficulty swallowing and speaking. Moreover, pain with swallowing and difficulty swallowing can occur without nerve injury taking place, but these problems usually resolve themselves spontaneously within a week.

THYROGLOSSAL DUCT CYST RECURRENCE: A complication specifically related to thyroglossal duct cyst surgery is that of cyst recurrence. Thyroglossal duct cyst recurrence after surgery can be a drainage tract necessitating additional neck surgery in order to remove the recurrent cyst and sinus tract.

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ACTIVITY: Increase activity as able, but avoid strenuous activities such as lifting, pulling, and jarring exercises. Elevate your head with pillows when sleeping or resting for comfort.

DRESSING: Leave steri strips dressing in place until seen by your doctor at the follow-up visit. It is alright to shower 48 hours after surgery. Avoid letting water