



SURGERY TO REMOVE A NECK LUMP

(Parotid Gland / Submandibular Gland / Lymph Node)

Lumps on the neck can arise due to various causes and sometimes may need to be surgically removed. The surgery itself depends on the location, size, and features of the lump, but in all cases an incision will be made along the lines of the skin folds to allow for best access and exposure. The lump will be carefully dissected away from any surrounding neck structures, which may include nerves and blood vessels and will be sent to a lab for histopathology diagnosis; this will take around a week for a result. The resulting wound will then be closed using either sutures or staples and occasionally a small plastic tube will be left inside to allow the drainage of blood or fluid from the wound.

After your surgery, your stay in hospital will depend on various factors, if the surgery was uncomplicated and there was no drain left inside, then you may be able to return home on the day of surgery. If more dissection was required to remove the lump, and/or if a drain was left inside the wound, then you are likely to require an overnight stay. If there is minimal drainage from the wound, then the drain can be removed on the first day post-surgery; if there is a lot of drainage, you will benefit from it staying in for longer, which may mean a longer stay in hospital. The incision sites should be kept dry until stiches/staples are removed in 10 days.

There is usually some mild-moderate discomfort after surgery. Panadol or Panadeine should be adequate for this but avoid using Aspirin or anti-inflammatories like Ibuprofen or Diclofenac. Avoid strenuous activities and exercise over the first week or so and you will require days off work to recover – please ask for a medical certificate if required.

Watch out for:

- Infection – this is uncommon, but if you notice any discharge, especially if it is malodorous, fever, or if pain is worsening over time, you should contact your surgeon.
- Wound breakdown and separation of the skin.
- Swelling of the wound, this could be caused by infection or bleeding into the wound. If there is a large amount of swelling this can even interfere with your airway.
- Nerve damage
 - Numbness of the face or mouth
 - Paralysis of facial muscles, tongue, eyelids, or weakness of the shoulder when lifting.
 - Difficulty swallowing or hoarseness of the voice
 - Loss of taste sensation