

Living with Thyroid Cancer

A Quick Guide

Contents

This is a brief summary of 'Living with thyroid cancer' from our website. You will find more detailed information on there. In this information there are sections on

- Coping with thyroid cancer
- Life after thyroid surgery
- What to ask your doctor
- Thyroid cancer organisations

You can view this information in a larger print on our website.

Coping with thyroid cancer

It can be very difficult coping with a diagnosis of cancer, both practically and emotionally. You may feel very upset and confused at first. As well as coping with the fear and anxiety that a diagnosis of cancer brings, you have to work out how to manage practically. There may be money matters to sort out. Who do you tell you have cancer? There may be children to consider.

The coping with cancer section of our website contains lots of information you may find helpful including information about who can help, counselling, financial issues and much more.

Life after thyroid surgery

After any operation you need time for your body to recover and your wound to heal. After thyroid surgery you should not lift any heavy objects for about 2 weeks to avoid strain on your neck wound. Most people are able to go back to work about 2 weeks after their operation. But this will depend on how strenuous your work is. If you have had lymph nodes removed from your neck you may need to take up to 8 weeks off.

It is important to be patient with yourself and allow yourself to recover gradually. If you are worried about anything, let your doctor or specialist nurse know. After a few weeks, any stiffness in your neck and shoulder will be much better. There are a number of possible problems you might have after thyroid surgery. You may

- Have a hoarse voice
- Need calcium replacement if glands called the parathyroids are not working properly or have been removed
- Need thyroid hormone replacement if your thyroid has been completely removed
- Have swelling, numbness and soreness after your operation and need a soft diet
- Get an infection in your wound

We have more detailed information about calcium and hormone replacement, suggestions for a soft diet and ways to help prevent a wound infection on our website.

What to ask your doctor about living with thyroid cancer

- How will my treatment affect me?
- Will I ever get back to normal, or will I have some long term effects?
- Will I need a special diet?
- Is there anything I shouldn't eat?
- Will I be able to go back to work?
- Where can I get help with claiming benefits and grants?
- What practical help is available?
- Why did this happen to me?
- Are my children at risk of getting cancer?
- Where can I get help dealing with my feelings?
- Can you refer me for counselling?
- Do I have to pay for counselling?
- Could you refer me to a specialist nurse?

Thyroid cancer organisations

Cancer Research UK

Website: www.cancerresearchuk.org

Cancer Information Nurses phone: 0808 800 4040

British Thyroid Foundation

Tel: 01423 709709/709448

Website: www.btf-thyroid.org

Butterfly Thyroid Cancer Trust

Tel: 01207 545469 (Monday to Friday from 10 am - 4 pm)

Website: www.butterfly.org.uk

Hypoparathyroidism UK

Tel: 01342 316315

Website: www.hpth.org.uk

British Thyroid Association

Website: www.british-thyroid-association.org

For more information, visit our website <http://www.cruk.org/about-cancer>

You will find a wide range of detailed, up to date information for people affected by cancer, including a clinical trials database that you can search for trials in the UK. Our information is based on the best current scientific evidence and reviewed regularly by leading clinicians and experts in health and social care.

For answers to your questions about cancer call our Cancer Information Nurses on 0808 800 4040 9am till 5pm Monday to Friday.

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