

Living with Thyroid Cancer - A Quick Guide



Contents

This is a brief summary of the information on 'Living with thyroid cancer' from CancerHelp UK. You will find more detailed information on the website.

In this information there are sections on

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

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 CancerHelp UK contains lots of information you may find helpful. There are sections on

- Your feelings
- Talking to people: who and what to tell
- Talking to children

- How you can help yourself
- Who else can help you
- Sex and sexuality
- Coping financially

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

CancerHelp UK has more detailed information about calcium and hormone replacement, suggestions for a soft diet and ways to help prevent a wound infection.

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 Macmillan nurse?

Thyroid cancer organisations

Cancer Research UK
 Main website: www.cancerresearchuk.org
 Patient information website:
<http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org/>
 Cancer Information Nurses phone: 0808 800 4040

British Thyroid Foundation
 Tel: 01423 709709/709448
 Website: www.btf-thyroid.org

More information

For more information about thyroid cancer, visit our website
<http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org>

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. You can view or print the information in a larger size if you need to.

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

Adapted from Cancer Research UK's Patient Information Website CancerHelp UK in January 2012. CancerHelp UK is not designed to provide medical advice or professional services and is intended to be for educational use only. The information provided through CancerHelp UK and our nurse team is not a substitute for professional care and should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease. If you have, or suspect you may have, a health problem you should consult your doctor. © Cancer Research UK 2011. Cancer Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464) and in Scotland (SC041666).