

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THYROID CANCER

After Thyroid Surgery, Do I Need to Take Thyroid Medication?

Yes, if a total thyroidectomy, or removal of your whole thyroid gland, is performed, you will require a medication to replace your body store of thyroid hormone. This medication will need to be taken daily, and your surgeon or endocrinologist may adjust the dosage. The medicine completely replaces what the thyroid gland was producing so there is no weight gain being on the medicine.

Are There Any Options to Treat Thyroid Cancer after Surgery?

Generally speaking, thyroid surgery is the primary mode of treatment for a majority of thyroid cancers. Other therapies may be offered following surgery, such as radioactive iodine. These modes of treatment are usually well tolerated, and patients have a favorable prognosis. Chemotherapy and radiation treatment are reserved for cases where distant spread (beyond the thyroid and neck nodes) or when thyroid tumors are not able to be removed safely in surgery.

Can Thyroid Cancer Spread to Other Parts of the Body?

Thyroid cancers are most often slow-growing tumors, but with time they can spread and metastasize. Thyroid cancers can expand from the thyroid and cause injury to nearby structures by invading into the structures in the neck such as the esophagus, nerves, or windpipe. Thyroid cancers can also spread to lymph nodes in the neck, in which cases lymph node surgery may be recommended. In more severe cases these tumors can also spread to the lungs or bones.

Does Thyroid Cancer Occur in Men or Children?

Yes, while thyroid cancer is more common in women, various forms of thyroid cancer can occur in both men and children as well. Treatment methods are similar in all patients.

Can Thyroid Cancer Recur after Surgery and Treatment?

Thyroid cancer can return in some cases, and your surgeon and endocrinologist will monitor for any signs of recurrent disease through blood tests and ultrasound examination.