

## Removal of Thyroglossal Duct Cyst “Sistrunk Procedure”

**General Information:** A thyroglossal duct cyst or sinus tract is a remnant of the thyroid gland, a gland within the mid-portion of the neck. Removal of a thyroglossal duct cyst or sinus tract, also known as the “Sistrunk procedure” after Dr. Sistrunk, involves a neck incision with dissection up to a small bone in the upper neck called the hyoid bone. The hyoid bone is closely connected to the thyroglossal duct tract as it runs up to the deep substance of the tongue; therefore, the mid-portion of the hyoid bone is removed with a small amount of tongue tissue. The wound is closed with absorbable suture, followed by skin closure with Derma-Bond (super glue for the skin) or Steri-Strips (small narrow strips of tape). A light pressure dressing of gauze wrapped gently around the neck is applied, and the patient is observed overnight in the hospital.

**What to Expect:** Most children require five to seven days to recover from the surgery. Swallowing will be uncomfortable and may feel “different” due to removal of the mid-portion of the hyoid bone. If a drain was placed in the operating room, it will be removed the morning after surgery. A light pressure dressing of gauze wrapped gently around the neck is left in place for 48 hours after surgery and can be removed at home. Following dressing removal, the wound is left open to heal. There are no sutures to remove – the skin incision will either have Derma-Bond skin adhesive or small narrow Steri-Strips of tape in place. Derma-Bond will dry and peel away during gentle bathing. Steri-Strips will dry and curl, the edges of which can be trimmed. Steri-Strips that remain in place beyond a week can be removed safely at home. Avoid direct sunlight exposure to the wound for six months following surgery as this will cause excessive pink coloration. Gentle massage will help the incision line soften and thin. Monitor for signs of worsening redness and drainage from the incision and contact the office immediately if this occurs.

**Pain:** Children will have moderate to severe throat pain after surgery. For the first day after surgery, use the prescribed pain medication “around the clock” (every 4-6 hours) to prevent pain from preventing oral intake. Gradually transition to over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) as the pain subsides. DO NOT USE aspirin for 2 weeks before or after surgery as it may cause bleeding.

**Diet:** Encourage plenty of fluids and soft foods after surgery. Offer mild juices (apple), sports drinks, popsicles, pudding, yogurt, and ice-cream. There are no food restrictions. If your child refuses to drink, offer small amounts often. For young children, use an oral syringe and give 1 teaspoon every 10 minutes for 1 hour. If you are concerned about your child’s nutrition, offer Carnation Instant Breakfast or Pedia Sure.

**Fever:** A low-grade fever commonly occurs for several days after surgery. If temperature reaches 102°F, please contact the office; otherwise, continue to encourage oral intake and administer pain medication.

**Activity:** Rest in bed or on the couch is recommended for a few days after surgery. Activity may be increased slowly, with a return to school after your child is eating well, no longer using narcotic pain medication, and sleeping through the night. Your child may bathe at home after removal of the gauze neck dressing, though do not submerge the incision under water until one week after surgery.

**Contact Information:** The Otolaryngology nurse can be reached at (603) 650-4399 and can answer any questions you may have in the post-operative period. The Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center operator can be reached at (603) 650-5000. The following web page has helpful information regarding common pediatric ear, nose, and throat concerns: <http://www.entnet.org/kidsent>.

**Follow-up:** A post-operative clinic visit has already been schedule. Please confirm the date and time with the nursing staff prior to discharge home. If you have questions about the follow-up appointment, feel free to contact the Otolaryngology clinic at (603) 650-8123.