

When an individual is not a candidate for RAI, they may undergo a thyroidectomy, which is surgical removal of the thyroid gland. This procedure is usually indicated for individuals who have been unresponsive to antithyroid therapy, have a large goiter causing tracheal compression, or have thyroid cancer.

Lifelong thyroid hormone replacement will be necessary and the patient should be educated on the importance of adhering to the drug regimen, as well as having their TSH and T3/T4 levels checked.

Complications

Thyrotoxicosis

Thigh with Toxic-green-glow

Thyrotoxicosis is an acute, severe state of hyperthyroidism that results from excess amounts of thyroid hormones being released into the circulation (endogenously or exogenously). Those undergoing a thyroidectomy are especially prone to thyrotoxicosis as manipulation of the hyperactive thyroid gland results in an increase in hormones being released. Symptoms are the same of those manifested for hyperthyroidism but are more prominent and severe.

Post-Surgery Hypocalcemia

Post-Surgeon Hippo-cow

It is possible that during a thyroidectomy, damage to or inadvertent removal of the parathyroid gland(s) can occur. This can cause hypocalcemia to occur as calcium is regulated by the parathyroid.