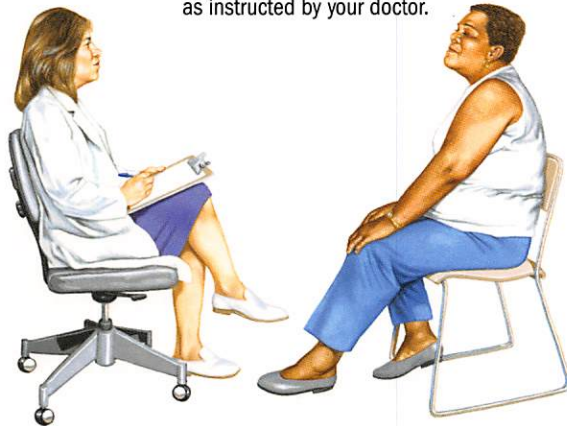


Only a biopsy can test for cancer. During a biopsy, some nodules can also be drained of excess fluid.



Treatments may include using thyroid supplements (levothyroxine). Take medication as instructed by your doctor.



Talk to your doctor about whether surgery or radioactive iodine treatments might be a better option for you.

How Are Thyroid Nodules Treated?

Most nodules are benign. Benign solid nodules are easily treated with thyroid supplements (levothyroxine) that help prevent nodule growth. Nodules that contain only fluid are drained during the FNAB.

Surgery may be needed to remove large nodules if they could be cancerous or if they crush blood vessels or other tissues in the neck. If the whole tumor cannot be removed, radioactive iodine can destroy remaining cancer cells. This treatment also destroys normal thyroid cells, so after treatment most people develop an underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism) and need medicine to replace thyroid hormone.

Complications after surgery include bleeding, infection, low calcium levels from damage to the parathyroid glands near the thyroid during surgery, or damage to vocal cords. An experienced surgeon usually causes few complications, however. Hormone therapy for benign nodules can lead to an overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism). Radioactive iodine therapy may cause other glands to swell and dry out.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Thyroid Nodule:

- ✓ **DO** have an FNAB of any suspicious nodule.
- ✓ **DO** find an experienced thyroid specialist.
- ✓ **DO** examine your neck to find new nodules.
- ✓ **DO** tell your doctor if you had radiation therapy to the neck or a family history of thyroid cancer.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you develop symptoms after treatment or surgery.
- ⊘ **DON'T** stop taking or change your medicine because you feel better unless your doctor tells you to.

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NOTES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- American Thyroid Association
Tel: (703) 998-8890
Web: www.thyroid.org