



Dr. *Francis T. Hall*

EAR, NOSE, THROAT, HEAD & NECK

Ethanol ablation of thyroid or parotid cyst care

A thyroid cyst is a lump in the thyroid that contains fluid. A thyroid lump is also called a thyroid nodule. Similarly, a parotid cyst is a lump in the parotid salivary gland that contains fluid. These cysts can be uncomfortable. They may also be unsightly. Dr Hall's approach to thyroid cysts and parotid cysts is similar. He drains the fluid within the cyst under ultrasound guidance and local anaesthetic in the clinic. This fluid is then sent to the pathology laboratory for analysis. Usually, the fluid is reported as non diagnostic as there are very few cells in cyst fluid and the pathologist needs a lot of cells to make a diagnosis. About 20% of the time the thyroid cyst does not come back. In the other 80% the thyroid cyst recurs. If this happens the cyst can be treated with ethanol ablation.

What to expect?

In the same way when the cyst was first drained, Dr Hall will drain the fluid again under ultrasound guidance and under local anaesthetic in the clinic. You are awake but the skin where the needle goes is numb. You will be able to feel pressure but not pain. The fluid that is drained is sent to the pathologist. Without removing the needle a small volume of highly concentrated medical grade sterile ethanol (alcohol) is injected into the cyst cavity. This part of the procedure is a little sore. A small dressing is placed over the needle site. Because the procedure is done under local anaesthetic it is safe for you to drive home or back to work the same day. The area is a little sore for 24 hours. Panadol and or ibuprofen is usually all that is required for pain. Later the same day you can take off the little dressing and get the area wet. You can go back to work either later the same day or the next day. If you do heavy manual work, please take the day off. The cyst may take several months to shrink in size. The average reduction in the size of the cyst is 90%.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Pain medicines:

- Dr Hall recommends simple pain medication such as paracetamol (Panadol) or anti inflammatories (Brufen, Voltaren)

Activity:

- Dr Hall recommends no vigorous exercise after the procedure for the remainder of the day as this may induce bleeding.

Problems:

- Just like a blood test, it is possible to get a bruise after ethanol ablation. Sometimes bleeding can occur. Damage to the skin itself is very uncommon.
- A hoarse voice from injury to the recurrent laryngeal nerve to the vocal cords is a rare complication following ethanol ablation of a thyroid cyst. Facial weakness from injury to the facial nerve is a rare complication of ethanol ablation of a parotid cyst.
- An infection may occur at site of the FNA, this is very rare. If you feel increasing unwell, please call Dr Hall urgently.
- A few patients may need a second ethanol ablation and a few patients may want the cyst excised.

Follow up appointment:

- Dr Hall usually sees his ethanol ablation patients three months after the procedure. He recommends repeating the ultrasound scan 6 and 12 months after the procedure. His nurse will contact you with the results of these scans.

Any problems call or text Dr Francis Hall on 021 733 677

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