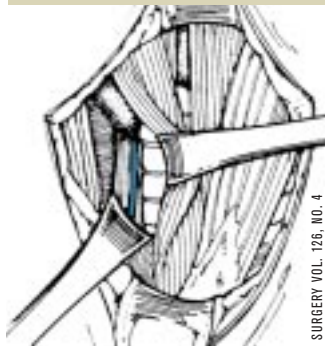


Thyroidectomy: 20 grams of prevention

Surgery forestalls Medullary Thyroid Carcinoma (MTC)

Although it produces one of the endocrine system's important regulatory hormones, removing the thyroid will inhibit later development of cancer in MEN 2A patients; the gland's necessary work is then performed through a lifetime of medication.



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A feared complication of thyroidectomy is damage to the nearby and delicate recurrent laryngeal nerve—a patient's voice could be permanently impaired. A lateral or "back-door" approach, pioneered by Jeffrey F. Moley, MD, helps to identify the critical nerve (shown at left in blue) and keep it out of harm's way during thyroid re-operations.

A dotted line indicates the former position of the thyroid in this child.



Here, cancer had spread from the thyroid to adjacent lymph nodes.



Unchecked, MTC may spread to attack the lymphatic system, the brain and the bones.

