Lateral Neck Dissection for Papillary Thyroid Cancer

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Abstract

Introduction: Lateral neck metastases occur in ~15% of papillary thyroid cancer and in ~40% of medullary thyroid cancer. We present herein a systematic approach to a standard comprehensive lateral neck dissection, with attention to specific areas where thyroid cancer lymph node metastases may be missed during surgery.

Materials and Methods: Video demonstration of a comprehensive levels 2a, 3, 4, and 5b lateral neck dissection for thyroid cancer.

Results: A systematic step-wise approach to a standard comprehensive lateral neck dissection for thyroid cancer, inclusive of levels 2a, 3, 4, and 5b, is demonstrated. Areas where thyroid cancer lateral neck lymph nodes can be missed are noted, including low level 4 nodes and carotid-vertebral nodes, level 5B nodes, and subdiaphragmatic level 2 nodes medial to the carotid artery.

Conclusion: A step-wise systematic approach to a comprehensive lateral neck dissection for thyroid cancer may lower the risk for missed thyroid cancer lateral neck lymph node metastases.

No competing financial interests exist.

Runtime of video: 8 mins 35 secs

Keywords: papillary thyroid cancer, head and neck surgery, lateral neck, lymph nodes, metastasis

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