



# Managing Thyroid Cancer Without Surgery

All you need to know about Active Surveillance and Thyroid Cancer

## What is Papillary Thyroid Cancer (PTC)?

PTC is the most common thyroid cancer, making up about 80% of all cases. It is usually slow growing, and carries an excellent prognosis. Surgery is the primary treatment for PTC, however some low risk thyroid cancers may not require immediate surgery. Our expert team is here to help evaluate your thyroid cancer and determine if you are a candidate for Active Surveillance as an option.

## What is Active Surveillance?

Active Surveillance is a monitoring program where patients are carefully monitored without immediate surgery. Twice a year, patients have a neck ultrasound and clinical examination. This close observation allows us to follow stable PTC tumors and therefore avoid surgery in many cases. If there is tumor growth or spread to the nearby lymph nodes, a delayed surgery has been found to be just as effective as surgery done at the time of original diagnosis

# Surgery, Active Surveillance, or Other Options?

A Personal Choice with Expert Guidance

If your diagnosis is Papillary Thyroid Cancer and the tumor is considered low risk, the choice between immediate surgery and Active Surveillance is ultimately yours. While there are tradeoffs involved in either choice, it is important to remember that the prognoses for both options are very good.

**Our doctors are dedicated to helping you walk through this decision together. Below are some important points to consider.**

Surgery	Active Surveillance
Removes your tumor, which may offer some people “peace-of-mind”	Tumor remains, which some may find emotionally distressing, despite the low threat
Frequently requires lifelong thyroid hormone medication	Does not require medication
Blood tests for monitoring of medication, and periodic ultrasound	Ultrasound twice yearly for at least 2 years, then as determined by the tumor's stability
Like all surgeries, may involve complications, and about a 5-day recovery period	No complications or recovery time
Small but possible chance of recurrence	Small but possible chance of tumor growth or spread