

Post-Operative Instructions
TONSILLECTOMY (with or without) ADENOIDECTOMY

Key Points to Remember

- A tonsillectomy is an operation to remove the tonsils
- An adenotonsillectomy is an operation to remove both the adenoids and tonsils
- An adenotonsillectomy is usually performed because of:
 - Snoring / obstructed breathing / pauses between breathing at night (obstructive sleep apnea)
 - Frequent and severe bouts of tonsillitis or recurrent infection
 - It takes 7-10 days for your child to recover from the operation
 - Encouraging fluids after surgery is important to avoid complications of dehydration
 - Bleeding from the operation site can be a complication. If this happens, gargle ice water and contact your doctor immediately

What are tonsils and adenoids?

The tonsils are two pads of tissue located on both sides of the back of the throat. Adenoids sit high on each side of the throat behind the nose and the roof of the mouth. Tonsils and adenoids are usually larger in children but tend to shrink to adult proportions by the age of 8 to 12 years. Although tonsils and adenoids are part of the immune system they are not essential and there is no harm to the immune system if they are removed. Other parts of the immune system in the upper throat continue to function.

What happens during the operation?

- A tonsillectomy/adenotonsillectomy is usually a 20-minute operation
- You will have general anesthetic
- The operation is performed through the mouth
- There are no stitches used in the throat
- There will be a small raw patch on each side of the throat where the tonsils are removed which will take 10 to 14 days to heal

What are the complications?

- Bleeding after the operation
 - bleeding from the area where the tonsils have been removed occurs in about 1 percent of patients
 - Dehydration and excessive activity following the operation increase the chance of bleeding
 - In most cases the bleeding is relatively mild. Only a small number of patients have to return to the operating room to stop the bleeding
 - Bleeding may occur more commonly 7 to 14 days after the operation. It is strongly recommended that you not travel overseas or to a remote area during this period
 - If bleeding occurs contact your doctor or seek emergency care immediately

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What can I expect after the operation?

- A tonsillectomy with or without adenoidectomy is a painful and uncomfortable procedure. Your throat can be sore for 10 to 14 days after the operation
- 5 to 6 days after the operation the pain may get worse as the white membrane over the healing area contracts and heals
- You may experience referred ear pain for 7 to 10 days following surgery, this is normal, it is not an ear infection
- You will notice white areas over the throat where the tonsils were removed; this does not mean infection and will resolve the first 2 to 3 weeks after surgery
- Bad breath is common during healing
- There can be some blood-stained saliva, nasal discharge or bleeding after the operation. Sucking on ice can help this, but if there is a larger amount of fresh blood (more than 1 teaspoonful) or if the bleeding continues for more than 5 minutes contact your doctor or seek emergency care
- Your voice may be slightly different after the operation but soon return to normal after 3 to 4 weeks
- Some patients experience a change in taste after the operation but this is only temporary and will resolve
- **FEVER:** a low grade fever may be observed several days after surgery. Contact your doctor if the fever is greater than 102 degrees.
- The most important requirement for recovery is for the patient to drink plenty of fluids. Offer juice, soft drinks, popsicles, and jell-o. Some patients experience nausea/vomiting within the first 24 hours after surgery caused by the general anesthetic. Contact your doctor if there are signs of dehydration (urination less than 2-3 times a day or crying without tears)
- NO BREAD PRODUCTS FOR 10-14 DAYS after surgery
- Your surgeon will prescribe appropriate pain medications. **Motrin or aspirin like products are not advised, this can increase the risk for serious bleeding*

A post-operative appointment has been scheduled for _____

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