

## Cleveland Head and Neck Clinic

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### TONSILLECTOMY / ADENOIDECTOMY

#### POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:

- You will usually be discharged from outpatient surgery after a couple of hours when nursing criteria are met and if oral intake is adequate.
- One can be out of bed as tolerated the first day, but with limited activity. If in bed, it is best to have the head elevated on a wedge or pillows.
- It is important to drink plenty of liquids and stay hydrated after the surgery. Kool-Aid, tea, smoothies, shakes, popsicles, water, and juices (avoiding acidic citrus juices) are examples. Ice cream, Jello, custard, and warm soups are also fine.
- When tolerated, any kind of soft food is acceptable, however, avoid foods that will scratch, such as tacos, chips, toast or pizza crust. Spicy foods that might burn should also be avoided. One should be encouraged to eat and to open the mouth widely at times during the first few days.
- Honey in teaspoonful doses may be given as desired to soothe the throat or for cough.
- Physical activity should gradually be resumed. No strenuous activity for three weeks, but one may go outside with supervision. No physical education activities for three weeks after surgery.
- If of school age, the child should be kept at home for one week after surgery. He may then return to school with the above physical activity restrictions.

#### WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Pain: Post-operative pain can last for one to three weeks. Adults tend to have more pain than children. You may be given narcotics to help control this, but alternating liquid Tylenol or acetaminophen with Ibuprofen in a dose appropriate for age and weight may be as effective. Follow directions on the medicine bottle. **DO NOT TAKE TYLENOL IN ADDITION TO THE NARCOTIC PAIN MEDICINE, WHICH ALSO CONTAINS TYLENOL.** Avoid aspirin. Also a prescription for a lollipop that contains numbing medicine may be given to suck on for 20-30 seconds and swallow every 2-3 hours.
- An earache after tonsillectomy is very common, and is referred pain. It does not indicate an infection.
- Voice changes are not abnormal but should subside in time after recovery from surgery.
- A grayish-white membrane in the throat where the tonsils were previously situated is always present until healing progresses – **DON'T BE ALARMED BY THIS.**
- It is normal for snoring to increase at first and then lessen.
- Bad Breath is normal. You may use mints or hard candy. Avoid irritating mouthwash.
- There may be increased mucous nasal drainage after adenoidectomy. This can be treated with over the counter decongestants, if desired.
- A low grade fever is common in the first 48 hours after surgery. In that time frame, a higher temperature can be helped by taking deep breaths and coughing gently periodically to keep the air sacs in the lungs open.

**BLEEDING:** The peak times for bleeding are in the first 24 hours after the surgery and one week later when the white “scab” is dissolving. Blood “streaks” in the saliva the first 2 days are not cause for alarm. Bleeding is considered serious when persistent, or if spitting up bright red blood or clots. If this occurs, call the office immediately and you will be connected with the doctor. If marked bleeding, bundle the patient in a blanket, and bring him to the Emergency Room at once, day or night. Notify the physician so that he can try to be there when you arrive. An ice bag to the throat may help while on the way to the hospital. Try to spare a child of being aware of your concern – he will be much more easily cared for by the doctor if not unduly frightened and apprehensive.