

## *Home Care After Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy - Adult*



Tonsillectomy is the removal of the tonsils. Adenoidectomy is the removal of the adenoids. Both surgeries may be done together or only one may be done.

### **General Information:**

You may lack energy for several days, and may also be restless at night. This will improve over 3 to 4 days after an adenoidectomy, and 10 to 14 days after a tonsillectomy. Recovery from an adenoidectomy alone is easier than recovery from a tonsillectomy. It is quite common for you to feel progressively worse during the first 5 to 6 days after surgery. You may also become constipated during this time for three reasons: you will not be eating your regular diet, you will be taking pain medications, and you may be less active.

### **Diet:**

It is important for you to drink plenty of fluids the first 3 days. You should try to drink one drink every hour you are awake. You may not feel like eating after several days. This is alright as long as you drink lots of fluids. Signs that you need to drink more are when the urine is darker in color (urine should be pale yellow). A high fever that persists may also be a sign that you are not taking in enough fluids. As your appetite improves, solid foods and chewing are strongly encouraged. There are no limits on the sort of foods you can eat. You cannot damage the throat by eating any particular type of food. Favorite liquids can be consumed such as popsicles, slushes, and soft drinks.

### **Activity:**

You should rest at home for the first 48 hours. Activity may increase as strength returns. Generally you may return to work approximately 10 days following a tonsillectomy; and about 3 days after an adenoidectomy. You should avoid swimming and vigorous activity for 14 days after surgery.

### **Pain:**

Throat and ear pain can be severe after a tonsillectomy. Take regular doses of pain medicine as often as every four hours. **NO** Aspirin or Ibuprofen products are to be taken for 2 weeks after surgery. Chewing gum may be helpful in lessening muscle spasm and is encouraged.

### **Bad Breath/Snoring:**

Bad breath is very common due to the healing in the back of the throat. You may gargle with a mild salt water solution to improve the bad breath (1/2 teaspoon table salt to 8 oz. of warm tap water) and chew chewing gum. Most patients breathe through the mouth and snore during the recovery period due to swelling. This may last between 2-3 weeks. It may be helped by propping up with pillows and using an ice collar. Turning on a humidifier at bedtime may lessen throat dryness caused by mouth breathing. Avoid over-the-counter mouthwashes (Cepacol, Scope, Listerine, etc.) - they tend to dry the throat and cause discomfort.

***Bleeding:***

There should be NO bleeding from the nose or mouth. If you have any bleeding at all, sit upright and phone your doctor immediately. Swishing the mouth out with cold ice water may help stop the bleeding (rinse and spit over and over). Between 5 and 10 days after surgery, the white or grayish membrane (soft scab) breaks off in the back of the throat. A small amount of bloody mucus may be spit up. If this continues after a few minutes, please call the doctor. If you are unable to reach the doctor quickly, please go to the emergency room.

***Fever:***

It is normal for you to have a slight fever (99.0° to 101.0°) for the first few days following surgery. Good fluid intake and Tylenol will help keep the fever down. If the fever is over 101 degrees contact your doctor.

***Nausea/Vomiting:***

It is not unusual for you to feel sick following a tonsillectomy. If vomiting persists into late evening, you may want to contact your doctor for a medication to help you feel better. If you are still vomiting the day after surgery you need to notify the doctor.

***For Questions or Emergency Care:***

Call the office at **601-984-5160**. You may need to speak with the doctor on-call.