

Recovering from Tonsillectomy and/or Adenoidectomy

The following instructions will help either a child or an adult recover as easily as possible from tonsillectomy and/or adenoidectomy. Taking good care of yourself or your child can prevent complications. It is very important that you read this sheet often and follow the instructions carefully while you are at home. Your doctor or nurse will be happy to answer any questions.

What can I eat after the operation?

For the first 24 hours after surgery it is more comfortable to drink only cold, non irritating liquids because they are easier to swallow than solid food. Try to avoid citrus fruit juices (orange and grapefruit) since they tend to cause stinging and burning sensations on the healing tissue. If you give carbonated beverages (Coke, Pepsi, etc.) let them sit out first until the fizz is gone so it doesn't cause pain.

Drinking plenty of fluid is important. Adults should drink six eight ounce glasses of liquid each day. A child should drink at least 1-2 tablespoons of liquid every 30 minutes. Urine output is a sign of getting enough fluid. If urine appears dark yellow, drink more fluid. A child or adult urinating light yellow 4-5 times a day is probably getting enough fluid. If you or your child is having difficulty swallowing these amounts of liquid and the urine output is low, you may be experiencing dehydration and should contact the doctor/nurse.

Most any foods that you or your child would like to eat will be alright, as long as there are no foods with sharp edges like potato chips or Doritos.

Suggested Foods:

Custards & pudding	Jell-O	ice cream,	yogurt
soft meat or chicken	cooked egg	soft vegetables	mashed potatoes
apple sauce	cooked cereals	strained soups	soft fruit(peaches, pears)

How much activity can be done after the operation?

After the operation, the tissue needs to have time to gradually heal. Any heavy activity can put stress on this healing and can aggravate bleeding. One should not do any heavy lifting of greater than 5 pounds (or about a full gallon milk jug), straining, or bending at the waist for two weeks after the operation. Participation in sports or exercise should be avoided during this time. After two weeks, normal activity can be gradually resumed. Avoid hot baths and showers. Do not sit out in the sun and avoid getting overheated. Also avoid people who have colds, the flu or any lung or respiratory infection.

How should I take care of my mouth and throat?

The mouth should be rinsed after each meal with water or salt water rinses. Do not use mouth wash solutions and try to avoid vigorous gargling. Teeth can be brushed as often as before surgery. Try to avoid alcoholic beverages and do not smoke.

What can I do to help the pain?



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The throat may hurt for several days. The prescribed pain medicine should reduce pain and make it tolerable, but often times will not make the pain go away completely. Pain often is worse when there is swelling from the surgery. Chewing and swallowing helps to reduce this swelling. Often times, chewing gum or sucking on hard candy can help. The throat also may hurt more during sleep because the throat is still at this time. Keeping a glass of water at the bedside can help. Taking pain medicine one-half hour to one hour before meals can make eating less painful.

Many times the pain can be worse on the fourth to fifth day after the surgery than it was on the first or second day. This is due to separation of the protective membrane of the throat which leaves a raw surface. Do not be alarmed if this happens. Sometimes an earache develops after surgery. This is due to "referred pain" because the same nerves that sense pain in the throat also sense pain in the ear. When there is pain in the throat, this nerve can make it seem like there is pain in the ear.

What are these white/ green patches in my throat?

White / green patches will form as the throat heals. This is normal and is not a sign of infection. They last 10-12 days after the surgery. The breath may smell while the patches show. eventually the patches will come off. When they do, the throat may bleed a little and be sore. If the bleeding continues, call your doctor.

What if I see bleeding?

Bleeding is rare but occasionally can happen. The most common time for bleeding after you leave the hospital is in 7-10 days after the operation. Just like bleeding can happen after a scab comes off of a wound on your arm, bleeding can occur at this time because the scab or film that forms on the healing throat comes off at 7-10 days and can be associated with bleeding. Usually this is minor streaking in the spit, but can be more. If it happens, sit up and suck on a small piece of ice. If the bleeding persists or becomes more pronounced, immediately call your doctor. You may need to come to the hospital/ emergency room to be evaluated.

What if I have a temperature?

Often times patients will experience a low grade temperature , sometimes to 101 degrees, for several days after the operation. This is normal and can be treated with Tylenol. Remember to avoid all aspirin/ ibuprofen products.

When should I notify the doctor?

- *Bleeding that does not go away with sitting up and with ice chips
- *Sharp pain that is not relieved by the pain medicine
- *A fever above 102 degrees that continues for more than 24 hours
- *Drinking liquids is impossible
- *Breathing is difficult
- *Stools are black and tarry- looking. This is a sign of hidden bleeding and that the blood is being swallowed.



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