

Post-Operative Instructions after Tonsillectomy with or without Adenoidectomy

What To Do

1. **Fluid Intake:** This is **extremely** important over the next several days to prevent dehydration. Encourage fluid intake throughout the day. All liquids and fluid filled products are OK. Small amounts of fluid every hour while awake works well. Signs of dehydration: decreased amount of urine or number of wet diapers, urine is dark, skin/mouth is dry, feeling sleepy or dizzy.
Suggestions:
 - Water, juice, Gatorade, soda, milk
 - Milkshakes, smoothies, popsicles, frozen Gatorade, ice cream
 - Puddings, apple sauce, yogurt, Jell-O, soup, watermelon, smoothies
2. **Diet:** A soft diet is recommended to start. A regular diet can begin as soon as you or your child are ready. If there is a type of food that you or your child prefers, you can feel comfortable starting it. Avoid very hot liquids and avoid chips or hard foods that can scratch the throat for 3 weeks.
3. **Chewing:** gum, gummy bears, fruit chews etc. This helps to reduce muscle spasm and promotes oral hygiene by increasing salivary flow postoperatively.
4. **Activity:** School aged children can return to school as soon as they feel up to it (off narcotic pain medicine if on it). Avoid very strenuous activity or PE for 1-2 weeks. For adults: no heavy lifting or heavy physical activity for 2 weeks after surgery.
5. **Pain medication:** Numbing lollipops will be prescribed to a local compounding pharmacy for all patients, children and adults. See below for additional instructions.

Children: You can give your child Tylenol (acetaminophen) every 6 hours, alternating with Advil/Motrin (ibuprofen) every 6 hours. This means you will give your child a medication every 3 hours. Depending on your child's age, a narcotic pain medicine may sometimes be prescribed. In this situation, Hycet or Norco (hydrocodone and acetaminophen) is given every 4-6 hours as prescribed; do not give Tylenol (acetaminophen) with this medication because Tylenol is in it.

Adults: Narcotic pain medicine is usually needed. This could be Tramadol, Hycet/Norco (hydrocodone and acetaminophen), or Oxycodone. Ibuprofen may be given but check with your doctor first.



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What to Expect

The pain and discomfort one can experience after a tonsillectomy varies from 1 – 2 weeks. This is usually due to irritation and spasm of the muscles in the throat. Generally, each day is better than the previous one. Sometimes around the 5th or 7th day after the operation the patient may experience a transient worsening of pain (“dip”) for 1-2 days.

Things to be aware of

1. Ear Pain- this is “referred” from the throat and generally is not an ear infection.

Chewing may help reduce some of this discomfort.

2. Temperature- it is not unusual for the temperature to reach 102° post-op. If it is greater than 103°, please call us. Always encourage fluids with a fever.
3. White patch over tonsil region- this is the “scab” and is normal. It is not an infection. It will disappear about 10 days after surgery.
4. Bleeding- The chance for post-operative bleeding is small (3%). These are the important points you should know about bleeding:
 - **When:** It usually happens around the 5th – 10th day after the operation.
 - **How will you know:** the patient will spit up or vomit blood.
 - **What do you do:** We would like for the patient to gargle ice water for a few minutes to see if this stops the bleeding. If so, that is all that needs to be done. If the bleeding persists, please call our office immediately to discuss the situation with our physicians and/or go to the Emergency Room.

Follow- up: You will generally follow-up with your surgeon ~4 weeks after a tonsillectomy.