

Century Ear, Nose and Throat Head and Neck Surgery

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POST OP TONSIL INSTRUCTIONS

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

1. DIET

- **Fluids are very important after surgery to prevent dehydration.** Start with sips of clear liquids such as apple juice, flat soda, clear broth, and water. Avoid citric juices, tomato juice, and carbonated beverages.
- **Slowly increase the amount of liquid.** Too much liquid given too quickly may cause nausea and vomiting. You/your child should consume 8 glasses of liquid a day.
- **Whenever liquids are tolerated, you/your child may start eating solid foods.** Remain on a soft diet for 10 days after surgery.

FOOD SELECTION

Some foods will irritate your mouth. Try to avoid hot, salty, spicy, rough, or coarse foods. The foods listed below will be easier to eat and less irritating to your sore mouth. As your mouth heals you can add some of your favorite foods until you return to your normal diet.

FOODS TO CHOOSE

Cold, soft, non-acidic, unsalted, bland.

Gravies, sauces on meats and cooled vegetables, macaroni and cheese, stews, casseroles, simmered foods.

Soups, scrambled or poached eggs, creamy cereals, potatoes, rice, pasta.

Fruit drinks, nectars (peach, pear, apricot).

Bananas, canned pears, peaches, pop, food pureed or blended, puddings.

Sherbet, cottage cheese, milk shakes, gelatins, Popsicles, water, ices, lukewarm broth.

Again, as your mouth begins to feel better, gradually add some of your favorite foods.

FOODS TO AVOID

Acidic, salty, spicy, rough, coarsely textured.

Acidic: citrus juices and fruits, tomatoes.

Salted: olives, pickles, Worcestershire sauce.

Coarsely textured: raw vegetables, bran toast, hard bread, crackers, popcorn.

2. BLEEDING

- **Bleeding is rare after surgery.** However, there may be a few little spots of blood from the mouth or nose for the first day after surgery.
- **Bleeding may also occur 7-10 days after surgery.** This is the time when scabs fall off the healing area.
- **If there is more than minor spotting, or if there is bleeding at any other time, call the office (708) 460-0007.** The doctor may wish to see you/your child in the clinic; usually the bleeding can be controlled there. Very rarely are you/your child hospitalized to control the bleeding.

3. PAIN

The amount of pain after surgery varies with each person. A tonsillectomy is often very painful. In general the pain lasts 7-10 days. The doctor wants you/your child to be as comfortable as possible. The following information will give you/your child the best pain relief.

- For mild pain use plain Tylenol every 4 hours. Children over 6 years old and adults will be given a prescription for a liquid narcotic or pills if you prefer. Children under 6 years old may take ibuprofen or Motrin every 6-8 hours. You may alternate with Tylenol every 4 hours if needed. This will help you/your child significantly if the pain is not controlled by plain Tylenol. The dose is carefully calculated so you/your child will not receive too much medicine.
- A humidifier by your bedside may help ease the discomfort.
- Try to sleep with your head elevated or in a chair for the first day or two after surgery.
- **EAR PAIN can occur after tonsil surgery and it may be on one side or both sides. This pain is not abnormal; it is referred pain from the tonsil area.** The pain medication being taken will help with this problem.
- **HEAD AND NECK PAIN can occur because during surgery the mouth was propped wide open. You/your child may have pain or discomfort in the back of the neck, back of the neck, back of the head, back of the head, or at the jaw joint.** The pain medication will also help this discomfort – **do not use any extra pain medication.** A heating pad at the low setting may be extra soothing to you/your child.

4. FEVER

You/your child may have a low-grade fever after surgery. The medication will also help reduce the fever. Using a thermometer, check the temperature and call the doctor if the fever is higher than 101.9°F (38.4°C) orally or 102°F (38.4°C) rectally.

5. NAUSEA AND VOMITING

- **You/your child may experience nausea after surgery and vomiting may occur.** This is usually due to the anesthesia. The staff will give you an emesis basin to take home in case you/your child become(s) nauseous and vomit(s) in the car.
- **A small amount of blood may be seen in the vomited material.** This blood was probably swallowed during surgery. You do not need to be worried about this.
- **Call the doctor if you/your child continues to vomit or if a large amount of blood is vomited.**

6. BAD BREATH AND COUGHING

- **You/your child may have bad breath after tonsil surgery; this is normal. DO NOT GARGLE during this time.** The raw area where the tonsils were removed becomes somewhat infected and this causes bad breath. As the area heals the odor will go away.
- **The raw areas may produce extra secretions that can cause you/your child to cough and gag.** Additionally, you/your child may seem to be more stuffy and congested after surgery.

7. ACTIVITY

- **CHILDREN naturally restrict their activity when they don't feel well.** When your child is ready to play, most activities are allowed with parental supervision.
- **ADULTS should restrict activity for two weeks following the surgery. Absolutely no heavy lifting or sexual activity for two weeks after surgery.** Rest is an important part of the recovery process and the heaviest thing you should lift is the Sunday paper. You may return to work when you feel strong – usually after one week.

8. SCHEDULE A POST-OP VISIT for 7-10 days after surgery by calling (708) 460-0007.

DO NOT LEAVE TOWN FOR 3 WEEKS AFTER TONSILLECTOMY.

CALL THE DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY IF:

- **There is bleeding that is more than a few little spots.**
- **The pain cannot be controlled.**
- **There is vomiting which continues.**
- **There are large amounts of vomited blood.**
- **You/your child will not or cannot drink fluids.**
- **You/your child does not urinate.**
- **There is a fever higher than 101.9°F.**