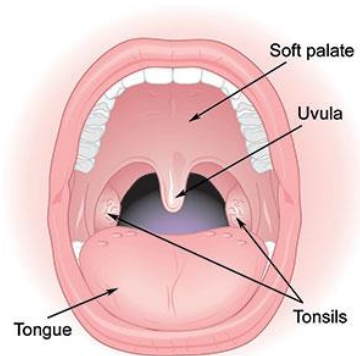


# Tonsillectomy (+/- Adenoidectomy)

## Patient Information and Postoperative Instructions

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### Tonsils and Adenoids:

Both your tonsils and adenoids are lymphoid tissue. These structures are used by your immune system to detect pathogens. Unfortunately, tonsils and adenoids sometimes cause grief due to recurrent infection/inflammation, breathing issues or cancer. As a result, your surgeon may recommend that they be removed. Your body and immune system can function perfectly well without tonsil and/or adenoid tissue.

### Potential Risks to the Surgery

Pain is the most common risk, which is temporary in nature and treated with good pain medication after surgery. Bleeding can occur in approximately 5% of surgeries. Serious bleeding requiring admission, a second surgery control the bleeding, or blood transfusions are very rare (less than 1%). Death from tonsillectomy is incredibly rare. Dehydration can occur but is avoidable with drinking fluids after surgery. Lip and dental injury are also possible but very rare. With some surgical techniques, tonsil/adenoid regrowth can occur. Tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy do not prevent sore throats due to viral infections.

### Post-Operative Care

#### Diet

The more you drink, the sooner the pain will subside. Water, apple juice, grape juice, and Gatorade are excellent sources of liquid. Adequate fluid intake is crucial to avoid dehydration during the recovery period. Fluid intake can be accomplished in a variety of ways including ice chips, popsicles, water, juices or gelatin. Soft foods such as ice cream, sherbet, yogurt, pudding, apple sauce and jello, should also be encouraged. Other soft, easily chewed foods are also excellent such as eggs, flaky baked fish, tofu etc. Avoid any hard food or foods with sharp corners. Avoid hot or spicy foods, or foods that are hard and crunchy. Carbonated beverages (Sprite, Coke, Pepsi etc.) and acidic beverages (orange juice) may cause pain.

#### Pain

Significant pain can be expected for 7 days in children undergoing tonsillectomy and for 12-14 days in adults undergoing tonsillectomy. Pain medicine will be prescribed for you. **Take the pain medicine on a regular schedule (every 4 to 6 hours)** to avoid peaks of pain. Taking Tylenol and Advil at the same time is safe. If Tylenol and Advil isn't relieving your pain, use the narcotic prescription provided. It is safe to take Tylenol, Advil, and your narcotic prescription at the same time. **Avoid** aspirin, as this medication can increase your risk of postoperative bleeding. Ice packs laid over the front of the neck may be soothing.

#### Nausea

Some patients experience nausea and vomiting after the surgery caused by the general anesthetic. This usually occurs within the first 24 hours and resolves on its own. Keeping in an upright position will help relieve the nausea. Over the counter anti-nausea medications can be used (Gravol). Narcotic pain medications (such as morphine or hydromorphone) may cause nausea and/or vomiting. Taking these pain medications after drinking or eating may decrease the chance of nausea and/or vomiting.

#### Bleeding

Bleeding is generally not expected. A small amount of blood (streaks) is to be expected but should subside after the first 2 days. **Blood clots, active bleeding or a mouth full of blood is an emergency and needs to be assessed in your local emergency department immediately.**

### **Activity**

After tonsillectomy, patients should rest. Most adults start transitioning into their daily routines after about 7-10 days. Heavy lifting should be avoided for 2-3 weeks. Children usually start playing after about 3-4 days and will tend to regulate their activity depending on how they feel. Strenuous physical activity is discouraged. Children may return to school whenever comfortable; a week is average, but 10 days is not unusual. Travel away from home is not recommended for two weeks following surgery.

### **Other Expectations:**

- Some weight loss is expected. In adults, typical weight loss is 8 to 10 pounds.
- Mild/low-grade fevers are expected. (Temperatures should be less than 38 degrees)
- Often foul breath is common after a few days and resolves within 14 days.
- It is normal to see white or gray patches on the sides of the throat starting 1-3 days after the surgery. Do not be concerned if the throat appears white and foamy.
- In children, a voice change is often heard temporarily.
- Full healing takes several weeks, but most patients are feeling much better at 14 days.
- You may brush your teeth but gargling and mouthwash are not recommended.
- Coughing and throat clearing may be done gently.

### **How to Call Your Surgeon:**

1. If it is urgent, call 911 or go directly to the emergency room without calling. Bring these instructions.
2. If it is not urgent, during clinic hours (8am to 4 pm), call **902 435 8690**. Messages will be checked frequently, and my office will return your call.

### **Postoperative appointment:**

You will need a follow up appointment 5-6 weeks after surgery.

**If this appointment has not been made for you, please call my front desk at 902 435 8690.**