



Post Operative Instructions

Tonsillectomy (with or without adenoidectomy)

Pain relief

Pain after tonsillectomy varies in severity and can actually become worse a few days after the procedure. The pain may even be felt in the ears. This is normal. Strict pain relief with medicine prescribed by your Anaesthetist is the best way to prevent severe pain. It may need to be taken up to 14 days after the procedure. Some of the medications are once a day, others twice a day and some more often than that. Antibiotics are also occasionally prescribed.

If you are worried about running out of pain relief medications please call the office on 9895 0400 or contact your Surgeon's secretary (via email) well before you run out.

Pain Killers

Adults: Simple analgesics such as Paracetamol, or Nurofen (Ibuprofen) may be sufficient. During your procedure the Anaesthetist will have prescribed a number of different strong pain relievers for you to use after surgery. These vary and will depend on prior patient experience and numerous other factors. These stronger pain medications may include Panadeine Forte, Tapentadol (Palexia), or Endone.

Some patients also receive anti-inflammatories such as Prednisolone and Celebrex. Read the product information leaflets with each medication prior to their use. Some of these medications may cause constipation and laxatives may be required for a short period.

Nausea after surgery is generally caused by one or more of the prescribed medications, particularly if they are taken on an empty stomach. If there is nausea with vomiting it is best to stop all strong pain relief and gradually reintroduce them with food. If you are unsure what to do, please contact your surgeon.

Kids: Children require slightly different pain management to adults. Most kids will have adequate pain relief with alternating doses of Panadol and nurofen. Some will also be prescribed some stronger anti-inflammatories such as prednisolone and others will also be sent home with a small amount of oxycodone for breakthrough pain. The correct protocol for delivering these medications to your child will be explained by your surgeon as well as the pharmacist at the hospital before you go home.

Diet

Eating and drinking a normal diet will help the healing process and actually reduces the risk of infection and bleeding.

There are no special restrictions on what to eat or drink. Soft foods like yoghurt and ice cream are usually preferable initially but a full normal diet is ideal. Some people find acidic foods like oranges difficult to eat. It is a good idea to take pain killers half an hour or so prior to meals to help with swallowing.

Antibiotics

If a course of antibiotics has been prescribed, please take these as indicated on the bottle or packet.

Why is my throat white? Is there an infection?

The area from where the tonsils are removed heals by forming a thick, white substance that may turn grey prior to the tissues healing completely and turning pink. It is not an infection unless it is associated a fever. Genuine infection in the region of tonsillectomy is very rare. If pain is increasing or you have a fever, contact your GP or your surgeon for consideration for consideration of further antibiotics.

Bleeding

There is a small risk of significant bleeding from the throat after surgery. If it is going to happen it usually occurs around days 5 - 7 after the operation but it can happen any time in the first 2 weeks. It is more common if your food intake has been poor or if you are dehydrated. Most bleeding settles on its own with sucking on an icypole or crushed ice but if there is any concern whatsoever, please phone the office or the hospital where you had the surgery. Any persistent or large amount of blood (you would notice fresh bleeding from the nose or mouth, or the vomiting of blood) requires urgent review and an Ambulance may need to be called.

In the majority of cases, bleeding stops very soon after arrival at hospital, and observation is the only thing required.

There is a hole in my throat where the tonsils were

The muscle behind the tonsils is very thin, and occasionally a small hole will develop in the back of the throat where the tonsils used to be. This is almost always harmless and will close up with time. Sometimes there is a thin strand of muscle visible next to the hole. This is also harmless and usually disappears. Usually after a few months the throat will look symmetrical again.

Sick Leave

Two weeks sick leave from school or work is advisable. Occasionally a little longer is needed. Please contact your surgeon's secretary via email for medical and carer's certificates if needed.

Exercise

Gentle exercise such as walking is OK in the first 2-3 weeks. Gym, swimming and sports are usually OK after that time. If there is any bleeding noted, strict rest in bed is advisable.

Follow-Up

Your first post operative visit should usually be arranged at about 2-3 weeks after the operation. It can occasionally be performed over Telehealth. You will generally be advised of the date and time for your post op checkup when surgery is booked. If you need to change the date or time please advise your surgeon's secretary via email.