

Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy

Information Brochure

Please keep this as a reference for after surgery

Indications:

Tonsils and adenoids are typically removed because of recurrent infections despite antibiotic therapy. Other common reasons for removal include difficulty breathing due to enlarged tonsils and adenoids and recurrent sinus infections. In addition, removal of the adenoids may be beneficial for some children with ear infections. In adults, the possibility of cancer or a tumor may be another reason for removing the tonsils and adenoids.

About Tonsils and Adenoids:

Tonsils and adenoids are composed of tissue that is similar to the lymph glands found in the neck, groin and other places in the body. They are part of a ring of glandular tissue encircling the back of the throat. The tonsils are two masses of tissue on either side of the back of the throat. The adenoids are located high in the throat behind the nose and soft palate and, unlike the tonsils, are not visible through the mouth. Both tonsils and adenoids are located near the entrance to the breathing passages where they process bacteria and viruses. It is thought that they form antibodies as part of the body's immune system to resist and fight infections. This function is performed in the first few years of life, but it is less important as the child gets older. There is no evidence that tonsils and adenoids are important after the age of three.

Risks and Complications:

Complications after tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy are not common. Any operation with general anesthesia involves risk, but today this risk is exceedingly small. Occasional bleeding occurs after tonsillectomy and less often after adenoidectomy. This can occur up to 10 days after surgery and is usually easily controlled but rarely requires a return to the operating room. Another uncommon problem is nasal speech which is almost always temporary.

Prior to Surgery:

For at least ten days before any surgery, especially tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy, the patient should refrain from taking aspirin or medications that contain aspirin. Tylenol can be taken if necessary. In addition, if the patient is taking any other medications the doctor should be advised.

Preparing a Child for Surgery:

When the patient is a child, the parents should discuss openly the child's feelings about the surgery. Encourage the child to think of this as something the doctor will do to make him/her better. Children should be aware that they will have a sore throat after surgery, but it will only last a few days.

Immediately After Surgery:

Tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy is an outpatient surgery. The doctor observes the patient for 2-3

hours after the procedure. An overnight stay is not usually necessary unless complications arise.

In the Days After Surgery:

After surgery, the patient may take 7-14 days off school or work. During this time, avoid any overexertion or excessive activity. Light physical activity, such as a walk is okay. Children should be excused from physical education for an additional 7 days after returning to school.

For approximately 10 days after surgery, the diet should be restricted to liquids and soft foods. Examples of soft foods include milk shakes, ice cream, mashed potatoes, cream of wheat, oatmeal, and scrambled eggs. Any foods that potentially could scrape the throat, such as chips, toast and cookies should be avoided. It is critical that the patient drink plenty of liquids the first week after surgery to prevent dehydration and help the healing process. The throat will be sore, but he/she **MUST** drink plenty of fluids. Avoid citrus products, such as orange or grapefruit juice. These may be irritating to the throat. Also avoid hot liquids or food. Alcoholic beverages should be avoided for 10 days.

You will be prescribed an antibiotic liquid for 10 days and a pain liquid containing Tylenol and Codeine. Please follow the dosing instructions for the pain medications closely. Patients may be tempted to decrease the dosage of pain medications or substitute with an over-the-counter medication as pain levels decrease the first few days after surgery. **THIS IS NOT RECOMMENDED.**

As part of the normal healing process for this procedure, patients may experience improvement for several days followed by a period of regression. This may last several days before improvement begins again. Failure to follow dosing instructions may make it difficult to get pain levels back under control.

There are several normal symptoms that occur after a tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy. **THESE INCLUDE DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING, LOW-GRADE FEVER, THROAT PAIN, AND EAR PAIN.** These are all common and will improve as the surgery site heals. Bleeding from the throat **IS NOT** common and the doctor should be notified **IMMEDIATELY** at the first sign of bleeding.

A post-operative follow-up will be conducted over the telephone two weeks after surgery. If you have any questions or problems, call the office at (806) 791-0188.