

TONSILLECTOMY AND ADENOIDECTOMY

Removal of tonsils or adenoids is one of the most frequently performed throat operations. It has proven to be a safe, effective method to resolve breathing obstruction and throat infections. Adenoids may also be removed to reduce nasal or sinus infections or to improve Eustachian tube function and reduce ear infections. While adenoid removal usually produces little discomfort, pain following a tonsillectomy is an unpleasant side effect which can be reasonably controlled with medication. It is similar to the pain patients have experienced with throat infections, but it may also be felt in the ears as well following surgery. There are some risks associated with removal of tonsils or adenoids. Postoperative bleeding occurs in 2% of cases. The peak incidence is 5-7 days after surgery but it can occur in the immediate postoperative period up to 2 weeks later. Treatment of bleeding is usually an outpatient procedure, but it sometimes requires control in the operating room under general anesthesia. In rare cases a blood transfusion may be recommended. Because swallowing may be painful, there may be poor oral intake of fluids. If this cannot be corrected at home, the patient may be admitted to the hospital for IV fluid replacement. Anesthetic complications are known to exist, however they are quite uncommon. There have been rare reports of death following surgical procedures, including removal of tonsils and adenoids. While the likelihood of tonsil regrowth is minimal, adenoid tissue can recur in young children.

After a tonsillectomy the throat will be sore for five to seven days (ten to fourteen days in an adult). A gray membrane may form in the area where the tonsils were removed. This is common and will gradually disappear as the healing process continues. Healing is usually complete in 3-4 weeks. School aged children should remain out of school for one week. They should avoid excessive activity (including gym and sports) for two weeks. As previously mentioned, ear pain may occur after a tonsillectomy. This is referred to by nerves from the throat and may be relieved by taking the pain medication prescribed by your physician.

HEMOCARE (TONSILLECTOMY)

Avoid excessive activity for two weeks.

Drink fluids to prevent dehydration. Gatorade, sodas and water are easier to swallow than dairy products. However, dairy products will coat and soothe the raw areas of the throat. They will also protect your stomach lining from irritation (and nausea) from the pain medication.

Chewing gum will massage the muscles in the tonsil area and it will relieve some discomfort. It should be encouraged.

Soft foods such as ice cream, pudding, custards, sherbet, jello, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, and pasta are well tolerated. Ground beef and meats can be added later.

Avoid acidic foods such as fruit juice and tomato products. Avoid spicy or very hot foods as well.

Avoid aspirin containing products as they may promote bleeding.

Running a low grade fever is common from days 1-7 following a tonsillectomy. Report fevers greater than 101.3 degrees.

Report large amounts of bright red blood from either the nose or throat.

HOME CARE (ADENOIDECTOMY)

There is little discomfort, but Tylenol or Motrin may be used if necessary.

Mild bleeding from the nose or throat may be noticed in the immediate postoperative time, but should resolve quickly.

No dietary restrictions are necessary and children can return to school the next day.

Some nasal congestion may persist for two to three days after the procedure.

Activities can be resumed in 48 hours.

The hospital nurse will contact you the day following your procedure. If you have questions or concerns prior to that, feel free to call us at (410)420-0057.