

TONSILLECTOMY PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS

Pain

- For 7-10 days adults will have severe throat pain. Pain for a child usually only lasts 5-7 days. Your doctor will prescribe a strong pain medication. It is best to take your pain on a routine basis for the first 5-7 days following surgery to “*keep ahead of the pain*” and to “*keep the pain under control*”. Cold liquids or ice chips may ease the pain, as well as cool packs on the upper neck.
- Ear pain: Several days after your surgery your ears may begin to hurt. This pain is called “*referred pain*” -- which is pain from the healing tonsil area rather than from an ear infection. Take your pain medicine and use cool packs to help alleviate this pain.

Medications

- You or your child will be prescribed a strong liquid pain medicine. Take only the medication prescribed.
- Diluting each dose with flat Sprite or ginger ale may prevent “*stinging*” when swallowing it.
- DO NOT take aspirin or Motrin (ibuprofen) 2 weeks prior to surgery or 2 weeks following surgery. (These medicines can increase your risk of bleeding.)
- Your doctor may prescribe antibiotics and steroids. Take these only as directed and only for as long as instructed.

Nausea / Vomiting

- This is not unusual the first day or two after surgery. Call us, if the patient is not able to keep any liquids down. It is very important to avoid dehydration. If you or your child becomes dehydrated, your doctor may advise you to go to the Emergency Room to receive IV fluids and/or medication.

Diet

- DRINK! DRINK! DRINK! The most important activity you MUST DO after surgery is to FORCE yourself or your child to DRINK! This prevents dehydration and other complications. Little sips are better than big gulps. Drink at least one cup of fluid/hour.
- In the beginning it will hurt to swallow everything, but by drinking fluids (staying well hydrated) you or your child can go back to normal activity much quicker. The more the patient drinks, the better they will feel!
- Suggested fluids include: water, Popsicles, Kool-aid, Gatorade, Pedialyte, Ensure, Carnation Instant Breakfast, sherbets, warm broths. Avoid hot liquids. Avoid citrus juices and tomato juices, which can burn.
- It will be easier to swallow if you take your pain medication 20 minutes before drinking.
- Chewing sugar free gum can help reduce pain by working the muscles of the mouth.
- AVOID dry, crisp or crunchy foods for 3 weeks. They may cause pain or bleeding.
- When you are ready to eat, begin with soft foods -- noodles, scrambled eggs, pudding, Jell-O, applesauce, and mashed potatoes are good choices. A regular diet can be resumed after 2-3 weeks.

Temperature

- You can expect to have a slight elevation in temperature, usually no greater than 101.5°F.

Swelling

- Your uvula (“*little punching bag*” at the back of your throat) will swell and possibly touch your tongue, perhaps giving you the sensation of swallowing your uvula.

White Patches

- White, gray or yellowish patches (or scabs) at the tonsil area are healing scabs and are not signs of an infection. This is normal and the scab will disappear as you heal. These scabs will generally start to come off within 7 days of surgery. During this time, more severe pain may be experienced. Call us if you notice white patches inside your cheeks or on your tongue, as these may be signs of thrush.

Bad Breath

- The scabs that form in your throat after your tonsils are removed cause breath odor that does not go away with brushing your teeth or gargling. **Do not use alcohol-based mouthwashes – they will burn!** Once this area heals, the bad breath will go away.

Weight Loss

- You or your child can expect to lose several pounds the first week following surgery.

Activity

- For the first 2 weeks get more rest than usual and limit your physical activities.
- You do not have to be bed-ridden or housebound.
- Avoid lifting anything greater than 10 pounds. (For a frame of reference: a gallon of milk weighs 8 pounds).
- Avoid exercise, excessive talking and any activity that will raise your blood pressure.
- No smoking or tobacco use of any kind for at least 2 weeks after surgery. **THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO QUIT!**

Return to school or work

- This is up to the individual patient, but for children it is generally 7-10 days. No Physical Education for two weeks. Adults may return to work in 1-2 weeks. No strenuous exercise for at least two weeks.

Bleeding

- A small percentage of patients may experience bleeding from the area where the tonsils were removed. If bleeding occurs, immediately gargle gently with ice water for 5-10 minutes. If this does not stop the bleeding, call the physician: 727-341-0551

Follow-up

- You should schedule a follow-up visit for 2-3 weeks following your surgery. The appointment should be set at your pre-op visit.

Call Pasadena ENT & Allergy (727-341-0551) if you have:

- Severe pain not relieved with medications.
- Fever greater than 101.5°F.
- Uncontrolled bleeding or blood clots in the back of your throat.