



TONSIL AND ADENOID SURGERY

Postoperative Issues

1. Pain

Pain is unfortunately to be expected after tonsil and adenoid surgery. Pain may be sharp or stinging for the first several days and usually changes to a dull ache as time passes. Younger children (3 years and younger) generally have pain for about one week, while older children and adults may have pain as long as two to three weeks. Many will also note EAR PAIN following the procedure. This is due to common nerves that go to both the throat and the ears, thus fooling the brain into thinking that there is ear pain when all pain is actually coming from the throat. To assist with pain control, and also to assist with fluid intake, popsicles may be eaten as often as tolerated. This serves as an ice pack in the back of the throat and may help to reduce swelling for several days after the surgery. For mild discomfort, acetaminophen (Tylenol) products may be used as appropriate for the patient's age and weight. A prescription pain medication is usually prescribed to be taken on an as needed basis. We recommend that the prescribed pain medication be taken every 3-4 hours in the first 3 days after surgery. It is important to avoid NON-Tylenol anti-inflammatory medications such as aspirin and ibuprofen products (**Motrin, Advil, etc.**) as these increase the risk of bleeding.

2. Diet

The throat pain most experience after surgery will greatly reduce the desire to eat or drink. It is most important that children drink following surgery to avoid dehydration. In the first several days following surgery, popsicles are excellent as both the source of liquids but also as aid to pain relief. Liquids such as Gatorade or Powerade are also helpful. As far as solid foods, anything soft may be eaten. Cooler soft foods are always easier to tolerate. Other foods should be eaten warm or even near room temperature. **FOODS TO ABSOLUTELY AVOID** if the tonsils are removed in particular are those that are somewhat sharp or scratchy, such as chips, pretzels, dry toast, pizza crust, or dry breakfast cereal. If ONLY adenoids were removed then there are NO specific diet restrictions. Signs of dehydration include decreased energy, low-grade temperature and dramatic decrease in urination, as well as a dark color to the urine. Patients who become significantly dehydrated may need to be seen in the emergency room to receive intravenous fluids and possibly be admitted.

3. Activity

It is best to avoid any strenuous activities for two to three weeks following surgery. Any strenuous activity carries with it a risk of raising blood pressure, and possibly leading to bleeding. Children should be excused from gym class, and should not be participating in any extracurricular athletic activities for three weeks. Light activity, such as deskwork or walking, should cause no problems.

4. Bleeding

Small spots of blood in the saliva are not uncommon for the first several days after surgery. There should not be fresh, red blood dripping out of the nose nor should more than a quarter-sized spot of blood appear in the saliva. Bleeding may occur up to two weeks after tonsil and adenoid surgery, when the soft crusts may fall off of the healing areas in the throat. If bleeding occurs, please CALL us. For severe bleeding the patient should be brought immediately to the emergency room. Of those patients who experience significant bleeding, some may need to go back to the operating room.

5. Fever

A low-grade fever (less than 100.5°F) is not unusual after surgery. Fever may also be a sign of dehydration. Please contact our office for higher temperatures that do not respond to Tylenol and/or re-hydration.

6. Breathing

Many children undergo tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy to improve their breathing. However, following the surgery breathing may worsen due swelling in the throat. This usually improves within several days. Again, use of popsicles should help keep the swelling down which may improve breathing. Any severe difficulties breathing should be reported immediately.

7. Bad Breath

It is common following the surgery for children to have bad breath. This is usually due to the mucus crusts and scabs, which form at the back of the throat, where the tonsils and adenoids were located. The scabs appear as a whitish area in the back of the throat on either side. This is the NORMAL APPEARANCE of the scab in the throat and does NOT represent pus or infection. In general, gargling or other maneuvers intended to remove the scabs is not a good idea as this can lead to bleeding. These areas will resolve on their own once healing is completed.

8. Nausea/Vomiting

One or two episodes of nausea with or without vomiting are not unusual after tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy. This is usually due to the lingering effects of the general anesthesia and thus should clear in one to two days when the anesthesia has fully cleared from the system. Most patients will receive medication during or after their surgery to reduce nausea. If there is excessive nausea or vomiting, or if this continues to be a problem beyond the second day after surgery, it should be reported.

9. Follow-up

We typically see our patients three weeks after surgery. Please call for an appointment.

10. Contact

In case of an emergency please contact (830) 627-3777.

11. Smoking

DO NOT SMOKE, it increases the risk of BLEEDING.