



TONSIL AND PALATE SURGERY

Postoperative Issues

1. Pain

Pain is unfortunately to be expected after palate and tonsil surgery. As the tonsil and palate surgical sites are directly in the back of the throat where all food must pass, swallowing usually worsens the discomfort. Pain may be sharp or stinging for the first several days and usually changes to a dull ache as time passes. Most 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. Eating popsicles or sucking on ice cubes will assist with pain control, and help to reduce swelling for the first several days after the surgery. For mild discomfort, acetaminophen (Tylenol) products may be used. A prescription pain medication is also 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. Bleeding

Small spots of blood (smaller than a quarter) in the saliva are not uncommon for the first several days after surgery. Bleeding may occur even up to two weeks after the surgery. If bleeding occurs, please call. **For severe bleeding the patient should be brought immediately to the emergency room**

3. Diet

The throat pain most experience after surgery will greatly reduce the desire to eat or drink. It is most important to drink fluids to avoid dehydration. Signs of dehydration include decreased energy, low-grade temperature and dramatic decrease in urination, as well as a dark color to the urine. In the first several days following surgery, eating popsicles or sucking on ice cubes will serve as a source of liquids and as an aid to pain relief. As far as solid foods, anything soft may be eaten. Cooler soft foods will be easier to tolerate. **FOODS TO AVOID** in particular are those that are somewhat sharp or scratchy, such as chips, pretzels, dry toast, pizza crust, or dry breakfast cereal, as these can irritate the throat and even lead to bleeding.

4. 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.

5. 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. Light activity, such as deskwork or walking, should cause no problems.

6. Bad Breath

It is common to have bad breath following the surgery. This is due to the mucus crusts and scabs that form at the back of the throat. The scabs appear as a whitish area in the back of the throat; this is the normal appearance, and does not represent pus or infection. In general, gargling to remove the scabs is not a good idea as this can lead to bleeding. These scabs, and the bad breath, will resolve on their own once healing is completed.

7. Nausea/Vomiting

One or two episodes of nausea with or without vomiting are not unusual after surgery. 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.

8. Follow-up

We typically see our patients three weeks after surgery. Please call for an appointment or make it at the time of the "pre-op" visit.

9. Contact

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

10. Smoking

DO NOT SMOKE, it increases the risk of BLEEDING.