



Postoperative Care Instructions Following Tonsillectomy (Age 13 & Older)

Medications

- With tonsillectomy, throat and ear pain are to be expected, possibly up to 2 weeks after surgery.
- You should take Tylenol every 6 hours and alternate with Ibuprofen every 6 hours. For example: Tylenol at 9a, Motrin at 12p, Tylenol at 3p, Motrin at 6p, etc. Use the attached medicine log to help you keep track.
- Use oxycodone (if prescribed) as needed for severe pain that persists following Tylenol and Ibuprofen
- If given, take prescribed steroids as prescribed.
- Use tetracaine Lollipops if prescribed as needed. Use between doses of Tylenol and Motrin for breakthrough pain. Do not chew lollipop. Place back in container or bag between uses.
- Resume all other medications unless otherwise noted.

Activity

- It is recommended that strenuous activity be avoided for 2 weeks after surgery. This includes sports activities, bicycling, swimming, weightlifting, exercise, PE, recess, dance, gymnastics, etc.
- Patients may return to work/school as they feel able (usually 1-2 weeks). Notes will be provided for school or work with restrictions if needed upon request.

Diet

- It is extremely important for the patient drink large amounts of fluids daily for 2 weeks. Any fluid or semi-solid foods (ex. ice cream, pudding, popsicle, etc.) are acceptable. Failure to drink increases the risk of bleeding and increases the pain felt in the throat.
- Tonsillectomy patients may start soft foods when they feel able and progress to a regular diet as throat pain allows.
- Avoid sharp foods (ex. Chips, etc.) for 2 weeks.

Fever

- A low-grade temperature (99-101) is common during the first 2-3 days after surgery.
- Fever over 100 may indicate that the patient is not drinking enough, and fluids need to be increased. If fever exceeds 101, please notify the physician.

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Bleeding

- Small amounts of blood-tinged mucous from the mouth or nose are not uncommon.
- Any bright red blood should be reported immediately.
- In the event of bleeding from the mouth, the patient should hold extremely cold/ice water in the mouth consistently for a period of 30-45 minutes to help slow the bleeding. If bright red blood appears from the nose, you may use Afrin spray or drops in the nose.

Other Helpful Information

- Since moisture helps soothe a healing throat, you may want to use a room humidifier.
- The tonsil area will become completely white. This is normal healing for the area.
- Many patients have bad breath after surgery, and this is normal.
- Many patients have ear pain after surgery. This is referred pain from the tonsil, and this is normal. It is unlikely to be an ear infection.
- Sometimes the pain does get a little bit worse before it gets better. This is not uncommon.
- There may be some increase in mucus production in the nose. This is part of the normal recovery process. If there is a significant amount of mucus or crusting, you may use nasal saline spray (any brand) 2 to 3 sprays gently into each nostril three times per day.

Please contact our office at 478-743-8953 if you have any questions or concerns.

Please attempt to contact our office first so that we may advise you appropriately. If for any reason, you are unable to reach our office or your surgeon in an emergency, please go to the nearest emergency room.

