

TONSILLECTOMY Post-Op Instructions

It is extremely important for your child to have an adequate amount of fluid after surgery. Almost everyone, even slender patients, lose 5-10 pounds after a tonsillectomy. As long as the patient is drinking liquids, they will recover.

The Minimum Amount of Fluids Needed Each Day

- 30 lb child needs 40 ounces of liquid a day (5—8oz glasses)
 - 40 lb child needs 48 ounces of liquid a day (6—8oz glasses)
 - 50 lb child needs 56 ounces of liquid a day (7—8oz glasses)
 - 60 lb child needs 64 ounces of liquid a day (8—8oz glasses)
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- Try cold, clear liquids first (ice chips, water, popsicles, kool-aid, fruit or apple juice, slushes, flat soda pop, ice cream and jello).
 - Add soft food as soon as possible (pasta, rice pudding, yogurt, mashed potatoes, bananas, macaroni and cheese and oatmeal).
 - No crunchy foods such as chips, pizza, popcorn, crackers, or other scratchy foods for 2-3 weeks after surgery to help avoid irritating the area.

What to Expect After Surgery

Throat pain is common for 2 weeks after the surgery. Pain medications help, but do not completely alleviate the discomfort. During this time, it is important to keep the child's pain medication on schedule. Giving the medication on time will promote a consistent level of comfort. Encourage the patient to take pain medications with food as it may upset an empty stomach. **Do not** use Ibuprofen or aspirin products for 2 weeks after surgery. Remember, it is easier for your child to tolerate swallowing fluids when pain is under control.

You can also increase your child's comfort by:

- Keeping the head elevated with several pillows.
- Running a cool mist humidifier if the child is breathing through their mouth.
- Discourage frequent coughing or throat clearing.
- Encourage fluid intake after pain medications have taken effect (usually one hour after the medication has been taken)
- Apply ice packs or warm packs to earache area.
- Encourage patient to chew gum to help with swallowing and saliva flow.

Nausea/Vomiting

If the patient is having difficulties with nausea, first stop the antibiotic. The codeine in some prescription pain medications can cause nausea and stomach pain. If this happens, stop the prescription pain medication and take plain over-the-counter Tylenol (acetaminophen) as directed on the bottle. After vomiting, always allow the body to rest for 1 hour before trying to drink anything. Then start with just a small amount of fluid and gradually work up to more fluids, as tolerated. Pain medications may cause constipation, which may be made worse by decreased fluid intake. A mild laxative, such as milk of magnesia, may be taken as needed. If nausea or vomiting continues to be a problem, call the office and a suppository can be prescribed.

Ear Pain

Often severe, ear pain usually begins on the third day and can last up to 2 weeks. Occasionally, earaches are worst 6-8 days after surgery, as opposed to the first couple of days. This pain is caused by the healing process of sensitive ulcers losing their scabs, not because of an active infection.

Fever

Many patients have a low-grade fever (between 99° -101° F), usually in patients who do not drink enough fluids. The fever is caused by mild dehydration rather than from an infection. For a fever about 102° F, please call the office.

Bleeding

It is common to have some blood-tinged secretions after surgery. If you see blood either on the tongue or lips, you should do the following: Give the patient a glass of ice water, crushed ice, and have the patient swish the water around in the mouth every 15-30 seconds for about 15 minutes. This will cool the back of the throat and probably will cause the leaking blood vessel to stop bleeding. If the bleeding does not stop after this, go to the emergency room for evaluation

Activity

Children who are active too soon usually have the most problems. The throat is usually adequately healed at 10-12 days after the surgery. Physical education, sports and band should be avoided for 12-14 days after the surgery. **Do not** try to restrain an active child, but do try to keep them calm. Many patients have reduced energy levels until their pain decreases and they are taking in more calories and nourishment. Once they are able to eat, they will rebound fairly quickly.

Recovery

Recovery time varies for each person. Although, the average is about 10-14 days, for most of the symptoms to clear, with the worse days bring 7-10 days after the surgery.

**Never hesitate to call the office if you have any questions or concerns.
A nurse will be available to return your call during office hours.**