

Southwest Ear, Nose & Throat

Head & Neck Surgery

100

Allergy & Sinus

Hearing & Otology

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TONSILLECTOMY POST-OP CARE

Post-Operative Care Instructions Following Tonsillectomy

The following instructions will help you know what to expect in the days following surgery.

Physical Activities

After this surgery, children should rest but may play inside after one or two days and may be outside after three to four days, if they feel up to it. Strenuous physical activity following surgery is discouraged. Children may return to school whenever comfortable; 10-14 days is average.

Diet

The more your child drinks, the sooner the pain will subside. Water, apple juice, grape juice, and Gatorade are excellent sources of liquid. Soft foods such as ice cream, sherbet, yogurt, pudding, apple sauce and jello, should also be encouraged. Other soft, easily chewed foods are also excellent. Avoid hot or spicy foods, or foods that are hard and crunchy. Often, chewing gum speeds comfortable eating by reducing the spasm after surgery and can be started any time after surgery.

Pain

For the first two weeks following surgery, pain in the throat is to be expected. This can usually be controlled with Liquid Tylenol (acetaminophen). Narcotics in children are discouraged by the American Academy of Otolaryngology and are not given per recommended guidelines. Avoid medication containing aspirin, ibuprofen, or other anti-inflammatory medication, for two weeks. Pain is often worse at night and may prompt the need for additional pain medication. Ear pain, especially with swallowing is also a common occurrence; it is not an ear infection but due to referred pain from the surgery. Treat it with Tylenol. Occasionally a stiff neck may occur.

Halitosis (Bad Breath)

Bad breath is common for two weeks after surgery and is due to how the tonsils heal. While healing, the tonsils become an off-white to grey color and is malodorous. This is normal and goes away in two weeks.

Ice Collar

An ice collar can also be helpful for a post-operative sore throat. Make this by placing ice cubes and water in a large Zip-Loc bag and wrapping it in a towel. Gently lay the ice pack on the front of the neck.

Fever

A low-grade fever (less than 102 degrees) following surgery may occur and should be treated with Tylenol (acetaminophen) and increased fluids. Follow the directions on the bottle. Children with a fever should play quietly or remain in bed. If the fever persists (more than two days) or if a higher fever develops, call. Fever may indicate that you have not taken in sufficient fluids or may have an infection.

Bleeding

Post-operative bleeding is common and can occur up to two weeks after surgery. Most bleeding is minor, and you may only see a little coating of blood on the tongue. Put your child into bed, sitting upright, and place an ice collar on their neck. You can also gargle with ice water.

Follow Up

A post-operative appointment will be made for three weeks following the date of your surgery. Dr. Prater's medical assistant will call you the day after surgery to check on you and confirm your follow-up appointment.