**Care After Tonsillectomy**

**Pedi ENT**

**Patient Information Series**

**713-486-5000**

# ent4.me/pedi-ENT



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## *How long is the recovery process?*

Most children take **up to 14 days** to recover from the surgery. Children typi- cally take a week off from school and should avoid strenuous activity, physical education and sports for 14 days. Travel on airplanes or far away from a medi- cal facility is not recommended for **14 days** following surgery.

## *What can my child eat or drink after surgery?*

The most important requirement for recovery is for the patient to drink **plen- ty of fluids**. Starting immediately after surgery, children may have fluids such as water or apple juice. Best to avoid carbonated drinks or spicy foods as these may burn in the early postoperative period. Some patients experience nausea and vomiting after the surgery. This usually occurs within the first 24 hours and resolves on its own after the effects of anesthesia wear off. Once your child tolerates fluids well, we recommend **soft foods** such as soups, ice cream, mac- aroni and cheese and so on during the recovery period for at least 10-14 days. Avoid foods with sharp edges such as chips, dry toast, or fried foods. Drinking through straws is okay.

# My child just had surgery for his/her tonsils and now has a fever. What do I do?

A low-grade fever may be observed the night of the surgery and for days after. Contact your physician if the fever is greater than 102 degrees or if any signs of dehydration occur such as crying without tears or decreased urination.

# My child is still snoring after surgery. Is this normal?

Your child may have noticeable snoring and mouth breathing due to swelling in the throat. Breathing should return to normal when swelling subsides, 10-14 days after surgery. Some increased congestion can also be normal in the healing period.

## *What will my child’s throat look like after the surgery?*

A scab will form where the tonsils and adenoids were removed. These scabs are first **dark brown then turn to white, and cause bad breath**. This is **normal**. The white scab is part of the normal healing process and is NOT a sign of infection and do not require antibiotics. Most scabs fall off in small pieces five to ten days after surgery.

## *My child is bleeding after his/her tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy. What* should I do?

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With the exception of small specks of blood from the nose or in the saliva with coughing, **large amounts of bright red blood should not be seen**. If such bleeding occurs, bring your child to the nearest emergency room immediately.

## *How much pain will my child be in?*

Nearly all children undergoing a tonsillectomy/adenoidectomy will have mild to severe pain in the throat after surgery. Pain often worsens around when swelling peaks at 48-72 hours after surgery. Some may complain of an earache (so-called referred pain) and a few may have pain in the jaw and neck.

## *What pain medication will my child receive?*

In the majority of patients, pain is treated sufficiently with a staggered alternating acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 6 hours with ibuprofen (Motrin) every 6 hours. For the first 5-7 days after surgery, pain medicine should be given scheduled around the clock for the best effect, including waking up the child to give medica- tion. The pain medication will typically be in a liquid form. Narcotic pain medication could have serious side effects in a child and are best avoided. Contact your physician’s office if pain is not well-controlled.

# Additional questions?

**Please call UTHealth Houston ORL Clinic @ (713) 486-5000 or send us a message through MyUTHealthHouston (MyChart).**