

ADULT POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR TONSILLECTOMY & ADENOIDECTOMY

General Instructions:

1. After your surgery you will nap more frequently, have less energy and be restless at night. These symptoms will gradually improve over a period of 5-14 days. Dizziness, headache and constipation may also occur. Good fluid intake will help minimize these symptoms.
2. A temperature of 99°-101° may occur during the first several days after surgery. This is often related to dehydration; it is less likely to occur with more fluid intake. Contact our office if fever is ever higher than 101.5°.
3. You may snore or sound congested for several days. The voice may also have a nasal twang or sound higher in pitch. These changes are related to initial swelling, pain and splinting of the palate and will gradually improve over several days to two weeks.
4. Halitosis (mouth odor) is common and will resolve once the scabs in the throat have dissipated.

Pain:

1. You will experience a sore throat postoperatively, for an average period of one week and for up to 14 days. The pain may be severe and can be worse at night. Pain may also be worsened around the fifth postoperative day, when the scabs in the throat begin to separate.
2. Ear pain is extremely common following a tonsillectomy. It is referred pain from the tonsil area of the throat and not indicative of an ear infection. It should be treated the same as throat pain (please see below).
3. Pain medication may be prescribed. The narcotic in the medication may cause headache, nausea, vomiting or constipation. A stool softener will help with these symptoms.
4. Ibuprofen can be taken every 8 hours.
5. Drinking fluids and eating (especially cold foods such as popsicles which numb the throat) are extremely important in reducing the duration of postoperative pain.

Diet:

1. Some patients will experience nausea or vomiting immediately after surgery. This should resolve by the following morning. If it occurs, do not encourage drinking right away. Gradually introduce clear liquids and advance to a bland, soft diet as tolerated.
2. Good fluid intake is the most important aspect of postoperative care. Avoid citrus fruit juices as they may sting.
3. You can start solid foods as soon as the first day after surgery. Begin with cool, soft foods (Jell-O, yogurt, pudding, ice cream, etc.) and advance to solid foods as tolerated. Allow hot foods and soups to come to room temperature before consuming them.

Activity:

1. Rest without major activity for the first 3 days postoperatively.
2. You may return to work or school when you feel well enough (on average, 7-10 days, but may require 2 weeks). No travel out of town.
3. Avoid vigorous or strenuous activities, such as swimming, running, dancing, organized sports or going to the gym for 14 days postoperatively in order to decrease the risk of bleeding.

Bleeding:

1. You may cough or spit out blood tinged mucus or saliva during the healing period, which is normal. The risk of postoperative bleeding is greatest between 5-10 days postoperatively, as the scabs in the throat break away, but can occur at any time during the 2 weeks after surgery. Call our office if there is any bleeding from the mouth more than 1-2 teaspoons.

Follow-Up:

1. You should be seen for a postoperative checkup in 1-2 weeks. Please call our office to schedule this appointment if it has not already been arranged.
2. Please contact our office with any problems or questions.