

Tonsillectomy in Children

Tonsillectomy is one of the most common procedures performed in children. Physicians may recommend this procedure for chronic obstructive symptoms (snoring), recurrent infections, chronic tonsillitis, abnormal tonsil enlargement, or severe infections. Tonsillectomy usually takes about 30 minutes to perform, and it is done under general anesthesia (while the child is completely asleep). Sometimes adenoidectomy is also done at the same time, to remove blockage at the back of the nose (this is also done through the mouth).

Tonsillectomy causes a sore throat for 7 to 10 days after surgery. Ear pain, bad breath, difficulty swallowing, a change in voice, and mild weight loss are some of the expected symptoms after tonsillectomy and will improve with time. During the first 1-2 days of surgery, it is normal to have some blood in the saliva. The risks of the surgery include bleeding (in less than 5% of cases) and the risks of anesthesia (very uncommon). An anesthesiologist is in attendance during the entire procedure for monitoring of the child. Dehydration may occur easily in children, so fluid intake is very important during the recovery. It is important to stay in town during the recovery period after surgery (about two weeks) so that the physician can treat the child if necessary. Please call the office and speak to any staff to schedule a followup appointment in 4 weeks (or per discharge instructions at hospital, if different)

- If there is continuous bright red bleeding, the office should be notified--choose option 3 to speak to a nurse. Don't leave a message. Call again, and ask operator to connect to nurse ASAP. Also try gentle cold water gargling as this often helps bleeding.
- Fever may occur up to 102 F after surgery. The prescribed pain medicine contains Tylenol to help with fever. It is important to encourage liquids to avoid dehydration. If fever persists despite the use of medications, notify the office.
- Sometimes pain may persist despite the use of the prescribed medications. Continue encouraging cool liquids to soothe the throat. There may be an increase in pain 4-6 days after surgery, which is a normal process as the surgical site heals. An ice pack to the neck area may be helpful for treating the pain. Also it is NORMAL to have "white- gray patches" at the back of the throat for 2 weeks, this is not an infection. Ibuprofen (over the counter, dosage per bottle) can be alternated with the prescribed pain meds for additional pain relief.
- Activity should be restricted to quiet play at home for 7-10 days. Children can usually return to school after 5 days (or when done with the narcotics pain medicines) , but recess, gym classes, swimming, and other sports should be restricted until about 2 weeks after surgery.
- Diet should begin with clear liquids (water, ice chips, Gatorade, Jello, popsicles,) on the day of surgery. Soft foods (ice cream, yogurts, scrambled eggs, rice, mashed potatoes) may be begun the next day. One can gradually begin a more normal diet, but scratchy foods such as crackers, , popcorn, and chips should be avoided for 3 weeks.
- Nausea/vomiting may occur after surgery because of anesthesia and pain medications. Stop food, liquids, and medications for 2 hours, and then resume a liquid diet.

If you have medical questions or concerns, please call 972-731-7654, and choose option 3 to speak to (or leave message) for the nurse. To expedite care, please note the patient's date of birth, spell the patients full name, and leave your name/relationship and best phone number. Thanks for choosing ENT Associates of Texas.