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## Instructions following Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy

What is tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy?

Tonsillectomy is removal of the tonsils. Adenoidectomy is removal of the adenoids. Tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy (T and A) are often done together.

### What can I expect after surgery?

It is common to have an upset stomach and possibly some vomiting (throwing up) during the first 24 hours after surgery.

The amount of pain varies. It may be more painful in the morning and less painful during the day when taking pain medicine and keeping the throat moist with fluids. Pain sometimes worsens again in the evening, especially during the first three days of healing. Soreness may be present for up to two weeks, usually when swallowing. It may get better after a few days and then become more painful again as the throat heals. Use of pain medicine during the night will reduce morning pain.

Your voice may sound a little different after surgery, since there is more space in the throat where the tonsils and adenoids used to be.

Ear pain is common, often when swallowing. This is because the ear and throat have a common sensory nerve, and there is an air tube that connects the ear to the throat. Jaw spasms (uncontrollable movement of the jaw) may also occur because these muscles were affected during positioning for surgery. Chewing gum may help relieve jaw pain.

It is common for neck muscles to be sore after an adenoidectomy. This may last up to one week.

You may have bad breath for a few weeks, until the throat heals.

Because your throat is swollen, snoring is common after surgery but should go away within two weeks. Raising the head of the bed and using a cool humidifier may decrease swelling.

### **Fluids**

Encourage your child to drink plenty of liquids (at least 2 to 3 ounces per hour while awake). This is the most important part of recovery. Keeping the throat moist decreases discomfort and prevents dehydration (a dangerous condition in which the body gets dried out). Signs of dehydration can be fever, urinating less than 2-3 times per day, and crying but no tears. If your child vomits, stop giving fluids for an hour and encourage lying down and resting. After one hour, start fluids again in small amounts. Nutritional drinks such as Ensure and Pedialyte can help maintain hydration. Liquids should be cold or room temperature.

### **Cold packs**

An ice collar may help relieve pain the day of surgery. Use the ice collar provided or you can make one by putting a few ice cubes in a plastic bag and rolling it up. A frozen bag of peas works well as an ice bag. Remember to put a towel between the ice bag and your child's skin.

### **Give medicines on time.**

It is important to give pain medicine every 4 to 6 hours (day and night) as ordered, for the first 2 to 3 days. Research has shown better pain control with regular doses, instead of waiting until the pain is bad and then trying to get it back under control. Plan to give the pain medicine 30 to 45 minutes before meals so it has time to work and help make swallowing easier. Tylenol may be substituted when pain med is no longer needed.

Distraction, movies, music, massage, or other non-medicine pain control methods help the pain medicine work better.

Can try Cepacol lozenges sold over the counter to help with throat pain.

### **What can I eat**

Encourage mild, bland clear liquids such as:

#### **Do Not Use Straws**

- apple juice or white grape juice
- Gatorade®
- Jell-O®
- Kool-aid®
- Popsicles®
- water

If you have an upset stomach, give small amounts often. Note: If you vomit after drinking red liquids, the vomit will be red.

When you want food, add dairy and soft foods such as:

- applesauce
- cooked cereal, thinned with milk (oatmeal)
- ice cream
- milk shakes (use a spoon, **not a straw**)
- mashed potatoes
- pudding
- smooth yogurt
- Scrambled eggs
- Macaroni and cheese

**\*\*\*Rule of thumb..... If you have to chew it to swallow it, you may NOT have it to eat\*\*\***

**ALL INSTRUCTIONS MUST BE FOLLOWED FOR EXACTLY 14 DAYS.  
YOU MAY RETURN TO NORMAL EATING HABITS AND ACTIVITIES ON DAY 15.**

**\*\*\*Your physician will send 2 prescriptions in for after surgery. One will be and antibiotic and one will be pain medicine. Please pick these prescriptions up at your pharmacy BEFORE your scheduled surgery.**

**Follow-up appointment:**

Your follow up appointment in the office will be 3-4 weeks following your surgery.. This visit should be scheduled prior to your surgery (at the time of your pre-operative visit). If you do not have the appointment made, please contact our office when you arrive home from the surgery center.