

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of the health care team about specific care for your child.

What is tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy?

A tonsillectomy removes the tonsils, and an adenoidectomy removes the adenoids. This may be needed when breathing is blocked during sleep or when there are repeated infections.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?

Your child may experience any of the following:

- **NAUSEA** - It is not unusual for your child to have nausea following anesthesia. If vomiting persists for more than 3-4 times on the day of surgery, or for more than 24hrs after surgery, please notify your physician.
- **FEVER** - A low grade fever (up to 101.5 F) is common for the first 5 days following surgery.
- **SORE THROAT** - Most children will experience a sore throat and difficulty swallowing after the tonsils are removed. Pain control with medication, and drinking fluids, are the best ways to alleviate a sore throat. Your child may have white/yellow/gray patches in the back of the throat for up to 2 weeks after surgery. This is a normal sign of healing.
- **EAR/NECK PAIN** - Many children experience pain in their ears and/or neck following a tonsillectomy or adenoidectomy. This is pain from the throat that the body misinterprets as coming from the ears or neck.
- **BAD BREATH** - Extremely bad breath is very common and does not signify an infection or problem. This will resolve as the wounds heal. You may brush your child's teeth normally, but do not expect it to make the breath any better.
- **HIGHER PITCHED VOICE** - This is a normal result following removal of the adenoids and large tonsils. If it occurs, it usually subsides within several weeks after surgery.
- **BLEEDING** - Bleeding can occur at any time during the two weeks after surgery, but days 5-8 after surgery are the most common time for this to occur. Bleeding is rare and only occurs about 1-2% of the time, but can be serious if not evaluated by a physician. *Call your surgeon if bleeding occurs, and they will direct you appropriately. Any amount of bright red blood, large clots, or vomiting of blood is NOT NORMAL, and you should proceed to the nearest emergency department immediately!*

ACTIVITY:

Your child may return to school 7 -10 days after surgery. No physical education, swimming, or organized sports/activities for 2 weeks after surgery. No travel out of state for 2 weeks, or out of the country for 3 weeks after surgery.

DIET:

Drinking is more important than eating in the postoperative period. Items that are well tolerated include all cold non-carbonated beverages (Gatorade, water, pedialyte, white grape/apple/pear juice, etc), popsicles, jello, and some salty foods such as broth and soup. Soft foods including pudding, eggs, mashed potatoes, rice, macaroni & cheese, etc can also be given. Try to avoid citrus, hot/spicy, or salty foods/drinks and any foods with crispy edges (such as potato chips, pretzels, fried foods). Signs of dehydration include not urinating/not having wet diapers and/or dry lips/mouth. If you are concerned or have questions, please call your physician.

Please refer to the chart below for minimum amounts of fluid for your child in a 24 hr period, based on their weight.

Weight (kg)	Weight (lbs)	Breakfast (by 10 am)	Lunch (by 2pm)	Dinner (by 6pm)	Total MINIMUM goal per day
9kg	20 lbs	5oz	10oz	15oz	15oz
10kg	22 lbs	6oz	11oz	16oz	16oz
11kg	24 lbs	6oz	12oz	17oz	17oz
12kg	26 lbs	6oz	12oz	18oz	18oz
14kg	31 lbs	7oz	13oz	19oz	19oz
15kg	33 lbs	7oz	14oz	20oz	20oz
17kg	37 lbs	8oz	15oz	22oz	22oz
20kg	44 lbs	8oz	16oz	24oz	24oz
25kg	55 lbs	9oz	18oz	26oz	26oz
30kg	66 lbs	10oz	19oz	28oz	28oz
35kg	77 lbs	10oz	20oz	30oz	30oz
40kg	88 lbs	11oz	22oz	32oz	32oz

PAIN CONTROL/MEDICATIONS:

Tylenol and ibuprofen are acceptable pain medications after tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy. Some physicians may also prescribe a narcotic for children that have breakthrough or uncontrolled pain after surgery; some may prescribe a steroid (dexamethasone) to assist with swelling and pain control; and some may prescribe an antibiotic after surgery. If your child is given an antibiotic to take after surgery, continue to give it as ordered until it is completed. Do not stop giving your child the antibiotic even if they feel better. Be sure NOT to give your child prescription pain medicine that contains Tylenol/acetaminophen (such as Hycet or Lortab) within 4 hours of children's over-the-counter Tylenol/acetaminophen.

**** As always, take post-operative medications as directed by your physician****

For teenagers DO NOT drive or operate heavy machinery while taking any narcotic pain medications.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL THE PHYSICIAN?

Call your child's physician if any of these occur:

- Bright red bleeding may need treatment immediately.
Call your physician first at 404-255-2033, then - if directed - proceed to the nearest emergency room for evaluation.
- Fever greater than 101.5 F, or as instructed by your physician
- Your child stops drinking fluids
- Your child has urinated or had wet diapers **less** than 3 times in 24 hrs
- Vomiting more than 3-4 times after going home
- Has any signs of breathing problems, such as:
 - Fast, shallow breathing
 - Labored breathing (hard to breathe)
 - Chest retractions (skin pulling in around ribs and chest when breathing)
 - Grunting when taking a breath
 - A blue or dark purple color to the nail beds, lips, or gums
 - Wheezing, uncontrollable coughing

**Call your physician if you have any questions/concerns about how your child looks or feels after surgery. Office phone number of Pediatric ENT of Atlanta is 404-255-2033.*

**In the case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911
or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AT 404-255-2033 FOR ANY QUESTIONS or CONCERNS



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