



Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy Post-Operative Instructions

Most people take seven to ten days to recover from the surgery. Some may recover more quickly; others can take up to four weeks for a full recovery. The following guidelines are recommended:

- **DRINKING:** The most important requirement for recovery is for the patient to drink plenty of fluids. Starting immediately after surgery, children may have fluids such as water or apple juice. 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. Contact your physician if there are signs of dehydration (urination less than 2-3 times a day or crying without tears).
- **EATING:** Generally, there are no food restrictions after surgery, but some physicians will recommend a soft diet during the recovery period. The sooner the patient eats and chews, the quicker the recovery. Tonsillectomy patients may be reluctant to eat because of throat pain; consequently, some weight loss may occur, which is gained back after a normal diet is resumed.
- **FEVER:** A low-grade fever may be observed the night of the surgery and for a day or two afterward. Contact your physician if the fever is greater than 102°.
- **ACTIVITY:** Activity may be increased slowly, with a return to school after normal eating and drinking resumes, pain medication is no longer required, and the child sleeps through the night. Travel on airplanes or far away from a medical facility is not recommended for two weeks following surgery.
- **BREATHING:** The parent may notice snoring and mouth breathing due to swelling in the throat. Breathing should return to normal when swelling subsides, 10-14 days after surgery.
- **SCABS:** A scab will form where the tonsils and adenoids were removed. These scabs are thick, white, and cause bad breath. This is normal. Most scabs fall off in small pieces five to ten days after surgery.
- **BLEEDING:** With the exception of small specks of blood from the nose or in the saliva, bright red blood should not be seen. If such bleeding occurs, contact your physician immediately or go to the emergency room.
- **PAIN:** Nearly all patients undergoing a tonsillectomy/adenoidectomy will have mild to severe pain in the throat after surgery. Some may complain of an earache (so called referred pain) and a few may have pain in the jaw and neck.
- **PAIN CONTROL:** Your physician will prescribe pain medication for the young patient such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen acetaminophen with codeine, or acetaminophen with hydrocodone. The pain medication will be in a liquid form. Pain medication should be given as prescribed. Contact your physician if side effects are suspected or if pain is not well-controlled.