

A **tonsillectomy** is a surgery to remove the tonsils, which are tissues in the back of the throat. Tonsils normally work to protect the body from infection. Often, a tonsillectomy is done if other treatments have not worked to clear up problems with the tonsils. Your health care provider may recommend this surgery if:

- your tonsils are enlarged and are blocking your upper airway, making it hard to breathe,
- your tonsils keep getting infected.

DAY OF SURGERY

Please review: *General Surgery Information Sheet*

Tonsillectomy is a day surgery. You will be discharged home the same day as your surgery.

PREPARING FOR YOUR SURGERY

The Nurse assigned to your care will prepare you for your surgery.

You will:

- change into a hospital gown,
- have an IV inserted,
- have your height, weight and vital signs taken,
- have additional blood tests done if required.

WHEN IT IS TIME FOR YOUR SURGERY

- A Nurse will escort you to the Operating Room.
- You will speak with your Surgeon, Anaesthetist and Operating Room staff and have an opportunity to ask questions prior to your surgery.

AFTER THE SURGERY

- You will be taken to the recovery room where a Nurse will monitor your vital signs and ensure your pain and nausea are managed with medication.
- Once you are fully awake from the anaesthetic, you are then ready to return to your room. You will be taken by stretcher to the Day Surgery unit where you will be monitored and be provided something to drink and popsicles.
- You will be monitored for bleeding.
- Once you are ready to leave, the Nurse will provide you with discharge instructions.
- Please follow the discharge instructions when you leave the hospital.
- Follow instructions: *Pain Management After Surgery*.
- Have a friend or family member drive you home following your discharge from the Hospital.

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Stay Hydrated: A dry throat will be very painful. Expect your throat to be very swollen and this will make it difficult to swallow. Cold water, ice chips and popsicles will be essential. Reusable ice packs to the neck will provide comfort and decrease inflammation. Have a vapourizer in the room where you are recovering to keep the air moist.

Pain relief: Recovering from an adult tonsillectomy is extremely painful. Set an alarm to take your medication as prescribed. Avoid all Aspirin products. You may be able to crush or break pills in half to make them easier to swallow. You may also feel nauseated due to medication and lack of food. Taking an anti-nausea medication such as Gravol, 30 minutes before your pain pills may help. Call your doctor if you cannot swallow your pills or they are not working. Expect pain to increase around days 3-5 when your scabs (white patches) are forming and again around day 10 when the scabs will likely be falling off.

Activity and sleep: Avoid vigorous exercise and heavy lifting for 2 weeks. It may be difficult to sleep due to pain. Use extra pillows to breathe more easily. Some people find that sleeping in a recliner chair is easier initially.

Nutrition: Try to avoid milk products for the first 3 days as this may increase phlegm production. Soft foods like jello, pudding and scrambled eggs, soups and smoothies or supplements like Boost or Ensure may be easiest to swallow. Avoid anything spicy, acidic, rough or hot. You must drink lots of water!

Oral hygiene: Brushing teeth gently and gargling gently 2-3 times a day will feel good and help with bad breath. Do not smoke. You may notice a white film cover the areas where your tonsils were removed, this is normal. These are the scabs that will fall off about 10 days after surgery.

Ear pain: Around day 3, you may feel pain in both ears and this is normal after a tonsillectomy. Ice packs to the ears, warm showers and chewing gum may help with this.

Contact a health care provider if:

- your pain gets worse or is not controlled with medicines,
- you have a fever that lasts longer than 2 days,
- you feel light-headed or you faint,
- you are unable to swallow even small amounts of liquid or saliva,
- you have signs of dehydration, including urinating fewer than 2–3 times a day or having urine that is very dark.

Go to the Emergency Room if you experience any of the following:

- you have trouble breathing,
- you bleed bright red blood from your throat,
- you vomit bright red blood.