



Patient Information

Patient Information – Following Tonsillectomy and Adenotonsillectomy

Introduction

Tonsillectomy (removal of tonsils) and adenotonsillectomy (removal of adenoids and tonsils) are common operations performed in both children and adults. The purpose of this leaflet is to help you understand what to expect after the operation, and to help manage your symptoms. While reading this leaflet, if your child has had an operation, please substitute 'you/your' to mean 'your child'.

After General Anaesthetic

After any surgery, especially after a general anaesthetic, you may feel tired and disorientated. You should not drive or operate machinery for 48 hours following surgery. Insurance companies may not cover you in the event of an accident occurring within a few days of surgery.

To recover from tonsillectomy / adenotonsillectomy you should:

- Go home and rest. Avoid exercise or strenuous activities for two weeks.
- Drink plenty of fluids to maintain hydration.
- Eat normal food. This is very important for helping healing.

For children in particular:

1. Do not leave your child unsupervised.
2. Do not allow your child to lock the bathroom or toilet door.
3. Avoid going out to crowded places / mixing with other children as this increases the risk of catching a viral illness which may cause infection.

What can I expect after the operation?

The following things are normal after this operation:

- A very sore throat
- Earache
- A slight temperature (up to 38°C)
- A white or yellow coating to the back of the throat



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How often do I need to take pain relief?

Regular doses of paracetamol **and** ibuprofen will usually suffice for pain control in children under the age of 12 years always read packet instructions. Although adults and some older children may be given additional medications on discharge from hospital.

Make sure you give the right dosage for you / your child's age or weight. **Pain relief medications need to be taken regularly to avoid flare-ups of pain during recovery**, we suggest they are taken regularly for the first week at least, and until no longer required.

Pain is expected after this operation. The pain is usually worst during the first few days after the operation and may even increase further for up to seven days before getting better again. Pain relief helps but it does not completely relieve all the discomfort.

What if I need extra pain relief?

- You may find a local anaesthetic spray useful such as 'Difflam'. You can get these from your local chemist or supermarket pharmacy aisle or counter without prescription.
- **Do not take aspirin** as it may increase the risk of bleeding
- If you have been prescribed codeine, this can be taken regularly at the same time as paracetamol. **Codeine should not be used in children under 16 years of age.** If codeine is taken regularly it can cause constipation and you may require a laxative.
- If you have been prescribed oramorph, it can be taken, as per the label. **You must return any unused oramorph to your local chemist. Do not keep it at home for use at a later date.**
- If you require supplemental pain relief in addition to the above, please get in touch with your GP. If you cannot contact your GP easily then please contact the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) team.

What should I eat?

Eating a normal diet has been shown to reduce pain and prevent infection.

We recommend:

- You begin eating and drinking as soon as possible after the operation.
- Very spicy or very hot foods should be avoided.
- Ice creams / lollies can be soothing in between doses of pain medication.
- Eating 30-45 minutes after taking pain medication.
- It may be easier to eat little and often.



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When can I go back to work or school?

You or your child should avoid going to work or school, crowded places, or being near people with colds or sore throats for two weeks after the operation. Please be aware that recovery times can vary.

What things should I look out for?

After surgery it is normal for the back of the throat to be a white or yellow colour for several weeks, this is expected while your throat heals and will resolve within a month or so. A small amount of blood streaking in the saliva/spit is expected for the first day or two after the operation.

However, more serious things to watch out for are:

- Bleeding - fresh blood, vomiting blood or large blood clots **is not normal**
- Being unable to swallow pain medications or fluid
- Fever - temperature over 38 °C (this may be a sign of infection)

If you experience any significant **bleeding** (more than a teaspoon), you should attend your nearest **Emergency Department** without delay.

If you are unable to take your pain medications, drink fluids, or experience a high fever, you may contact our department directly, or see your GP as you may require supplemental pain medications, antibiotics, or possibly re-admission.

Follow up:

No follow up appointment is required unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.

How do I get in touch?

If you need any further advice, we advise that you contact the hospital using the contact numbers below. Your first point of contact should be the ENT department during working hours Monday to Friday 8am to 4.30 pm. Outside of these hours please contact the ward from which you were discharged, your emergency GP service or the NHS helpline.

ENT clinic Nurse:	01793 604414	(As above)
Children's Unit:	01793 604095	(24h / 7 days)
Day Surgery:	01793 604152 / 4148	(0800 - 2000 weekdays)
Daisy Ward:	01793 603040 / 3041	(24h / 7 days)
Meldon Ward:	01793 646276	(24h / 7 days)
Shalbourne Suite:	01793 646060	(24h / 7 days)
NHS Helpline:	111	(24h / 7 days)



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Please remember you were given the following pain relief while in hospital

Paracetamol at:

Codeine at:

Ibuprofen at:

Smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

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