

# Post-op Instructions for Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy

## After Surgery it is normal to have:

- Moderate to severe throat pain.
- Moderate to severe ear pain. This pain is associated with the throat pain, and is not the cause of an ear infection.
- Foul breath and white crusts in the back of your throat. This is from the scab that forms after surgery.
- Temperature that can run as high as 102.
- Runny nose and dry cough
- Temporary voice changes with high pitched, whiney, nasal quality.
- Tongue numbness, minor swelling, altered taste.
- Minor bleeding on and off from the back of the throat and nose. Gargling with ice cold water may help with small amounts of bleeding from the throat.
- Increase in pain between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> days due to the normal healing process.

## Things to do at home:

- Manage the pain by taking the prescribed pain medication every four hours. You may flavor the medication with Hershey chocolate syrup or other flavors. Keep the medication chilled. Do not drive while on pain medication.
  - Do not take additional Tylenol. There is Tylenol in your pain medication.
- Take your antibiotics prescribed.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Any fluid is okay. Milk and milk products may cause an increase in phlegm in the back of the throat. Carbonated drinks may cause discomfort. Acidic drinks, like orange juice may burn.

- Eat soft foods until your follow-up with the physician. Examples—ice cream, jell-o, pudding, soups, Ensure, milkshakes, protein shakes, eggs, noodles, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, etc.
- AVOID crunchy, spicy, salty or sour foods.
- May eat chewy candies, chewing gum, ice chips.
- Elevate your head with 3-4 pillows to help with swelling.
- May use a humidifier
- Brush your teeth and tongue daily.
- Make sure you are taking enough fluids. Check the amount of fluid you drink and how often you go to the bathroom. As long as you urinate 2 times a day or your child has 2-3 wet diapers per day, you are getting enough fluids.
- May gargle with warm salt water after the 6<sup>th</sup> day.
- May use over the counter sore throat sprays or lozenges to ease the pain.
- Recovery:
  - Adults are typically out of work for 1-2 weeks.
  - Young children—3-5 day recovery
  - Older children—5-7 days of recovery
- Gauge child's readiness to return to normal activities by one great day with no fever, no need for pain medications, eating and drinking without much difficulty, and sleeping well.

**Things NOT to do:**

- No strenuous activity, heavy lifting, straining for 2 weeks.
- Avoid irritants; do not blow your nose.
- Avoid sharp foods, like crackers, chips or pretzels.
- No Aspirin, Motrin, Aleve, ibuprofen, or any medication that thins the blood for two weeks after surgery.

**Call our Office for:**

- Severe bleeding. After a tonsillectomy there is a small possibility that you may get a post-tonsillectomy bleed. This is different from just a little bleeding. If you have a significant amount of blood from your mouth, or are coughing or vomiting up blood, call your physician or go directly to the nearest emergency room. Try to remain calm, sit quietly, apply cold cloth around the neck.
- A temperature over 102.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Signs of dehydration in a child: decreased urination, lack of tears, sunken eyes, dry skin.  
Your child may need to be admitted for intravenous fluid administration.
- Constipation that becomes a problem.

Our office personnel and your doctor are eager to support you through this process. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or problems.