

# TONSILLECTOMY & ADENOIDECTOMY

## WHAT IS TONSILLECTOMY AND ADENOIDECTOMY?

Tonsillectomy is removal of the tonsils. Tonsils are lymph-like soft tissue located on both sides of the back of the throat. Adenoidectomy is removal of the adenoids. Adenoids are soft tissue located behind the nose. Both help your body fight infection by producing antibodies to combat bacteria that enter through the mouth and nose. Tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy ("T & A") surgery are often, but not always, done together.

## WHY HAVE YOUR TONSILS REMOVED?

Approximately 600,000 people have their tonsils removed each year. Tonsils and adenoids can cause health problems when they become infected or obstruct normal breathing or nasal/sinus drainage. Recurring infections in the tonsils can lead to chronic tonsillitis. Symptoms include fever, persistent sore throat, redness of the tonsil area, and tender lymph nodes on both sides of the neck. Enlarged tonsils are the most common reason for a person to have a tonsillectomy. In addition to blocking the throat, enlarged tonsils may interfere with normal breathing, nasal sinus drainage, sleeping, swallowing and speaking. They may also aggravate snoring and can even cause an alarming condition called sleep apnea, which involves an occasional stoppage of breathing while you are sleeping.

## DO YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS?

- 3-4 episodes of infectious tonsillitis per year for three consecutive years.
- 5 episodes of infectious tonsillitis per year for two years.
- 7 episodes of infectious tonsillitis in one year.

## WHAT IS COBLATION?

Coblation is advanced technology that combines gentle radio-frequency energy with natural saline to quickly, and safely remove/dissolve tonsils and adenoids. Because traditional procedures use high levels of heat to remove tonsils, damage to surrounding healthy tissue is common. Coblation does not remove the tonsils by heating or burning, leaving the healthy tissue surrounding the tonsils intact. Coblation results in less pain and more rapid recovery for patients.

## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY:

Please keep in mind that not each surgical experience will be the same for everyone. Generally, adults have a longer recovery period than children do.

### **THROAT PAIN**

Throat pain may be the most severe for the first 2-5 days after surgery, but may last up to two weeks. Occasionally the pain will peak at the mid portion of recovery i.e.: day 3-5 post-op surgery. This is normal--- keep drinking! Your doctor may prescribe pain medication, which will minimize discomfort. **It is important to drink plenty of fluids after surgery.** This will help thin secretions in the throat, which will decrease pain and make swallowing easier. Your throat may be sore for 2 weeks, especially when eating. The soreness may get better after a few days and then worse again. Your voice may even change a little after surgery.

### **EAR PAIN**

Ear pain following surgery is very common and does not mean that the patient has an ear infection. This happens because the nerves that control sensations in the throat are connected to the nerves in the ears. This pain usually lasts for only a few days, and can be controlled by applying a heating pad or a warm compress to the ears for 10-20 minutes as needed.

### **NECK SORENESS**

Neck soreness is common after an adenoidectomy and usually lasts about one week. Applying heat to the area may help alleviate this.

### **LOW-GRADE FEVER**

Low-grade fever may be present even up to a few weeks after surgery. Tylenol can be used to help bring the temperature down. If the fever becomes greater than 101, please call our office.

### **BAD BREATH**

Bad breath is also common for a few weeks after surgery.

## **HOW SHOULD I CARE FOR MY CHILD/SELF?**

Drink **plenty** of liquids (at least 2-3 ounces per hour). Keeping the throat moist decreases discomfort and prevents dehydration. Give pain medicine regularly within the limits directed by your doctor. Try to give the medicine 30 minutes before meals to help make swallowing easier. To prevent bleeding, avoid coughing, nose-blowing, clearing the throat and spitting. Wipe the nose gently if needed. When sneezing, open the mouth and make a sound, to prevent pressure buildup. Also, avoid coming in contact with people who have colds, flu or infections.

### **RECOVERY TIME:**

General healing time after surgery varies from person to person. It may take up to two weeks to feel "back to normal". No active play, gym or running for 2-3 weeks after surgery. Children can usually return to school or day care after 7-10 days. Teenagers/Adults may take from 10-14 days for recovery.

While you are healing from tonsil surgery, white patches may appear in the throat. This is normal and is NOT a sign of infection. These patches should come off in a week or so, and may cause a little bleeding. This may result in increased soreness and/or discomfort. If bleeding does occur, lie down and/or suck on ice chips. Call the doctor if bleeding does not stop with rest and ice.

## WHEN SHOULD I CALL THE SURGEON?

- Temperature higher than 101
- Any bright red bleeding that does not stop with ice water gargles or ice chips/popsicles for 20-25 minutes
- Vomiting bright red blood (not pink-tinged fluid)
- Nosebleed
- Pain that is not relieved with medicine
- Upset stomach and vomiting after 24 hours—unrelieved by stopping pain medicine
- Sign of dehydration:
  - Sunken eyes
  - Dry, sticky lips
  - No urine for more than 8 hours
  - No tears

## WHAT CAN I EAT?

Fluid intake is more important than food intake immediately after surgery. **Be sure you are drinking a lot.**

### THE DAY OF SURGERY

Give only cool, clear liquids such as:

- Apple juice
- Jell-O
- Kool-Aid
- Popsicles
- Flat soda pop (stir to remove bubbles)
- Water

If you have an upset stomach, give small amounts often. Note: If your child vomits after drinking red liquids, the vomit will be the same color.

### THE NEXT DAY

Add dairy and soft foods such as:

- Ice cream (sherbet causes less phlegm)
- Milk shakes (use a spoon, not a straw)
- Pudding
- Smooth yogurt

Add other soft foods (foods without rough edges) when you feel you are ready. Be sure to cut foods **very small** and chew them **well**. Continue the soft diet for 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. **Avoid** citrus fruits and juices such as orange juice and lemonade, as they may sting the throat. **Avoid** foods that are hot in temperature or spicy hot.

| <b>MAY EAT</b>                            | <b>SHOULD NOT EAT</b>            |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Soft bread                                | Toast                            |
| Soggy waffles or French Toast (no crusts) | Crispy waffles                   |
| Pancakes                                  | Fried foods                      |
| Scrambled or poached eggs                 | Chips, pretzels, etc             |
| Oatmeal, other creamy cereals             | Crunchy cold cereal              |
| Soggy, cold cereal soaked in milk         |                                  |
| Tender, moist meat                        | Tough, dry meat, chicken or fish |
| Soup                                      |                                  |
| Pasta, noodles                            |                                  |
| Spaghetti-O's                             |                                  |
| Macaroni & cheese                         |                                  |
| Hot dogs, hamburger                       |                                  |
| Smooth pb & j sandwich – no crust         |                                  |
| Processed cheese                          | Grilled cheese                   |
| Tuna                                      |                                  |
| Cooked vegetables                         | Raw vegetables / tomatoes        |
| Mashed potatoes                           |                                  |
| Applesauce                                | Fresh fruits                     |
| Bananas                                   |                                  |
| Canned fruits                             |                                  |
| Watermelon (without seeds)                |                                  |
| Juices                                    | Citrus juices                    |
| Jell-O                                    |                                  |