



Home Care Instructions

Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy

BLEEDING

- **Bleeding can occur up to 14 days after tonsillectomy. The period when your child is at the greatest risk of bleeding is between the 5th and 10th day after surgery. While it is rare (risk is approximately 2%), it must be treated promptly.** Therefore, it is important that your child not go anywhere that a doctor cannot be easily reached during the two week period after surgery. For example, your child must not take airplane trips, train trips, or go camping.
- If your child vomits blood, has any bright red bleeding from his or her nose, mouth, or if you see blood on clothing, sheets, etc., remain calm. Help your child to lie quietly on the right side.
- If this happens during the day, **call our office right away at (405) 608-8833 and say that it is an emergency.** If this happens in the evening, on the weekends or holidays, call our office so that you can be transferred to the after-hours clinic line and ask to speak to the ear, nose, and throat doctor on call. If you don't receive a prompt response, take your child to the emergency room of the hospital where the surgery was performed or the emergency room nearest your home if you live more than 20 minutes away from your surgery hospital. If your child has rapid bleeding that does not stop, call **911** or your local emergency number right away.

DIET

- **Drinking liquids is very important after a tonsillectomy.** Drinking helps healing.
- Give your child small amounts of mildly flavored, cool liquids often. For example, give water, diluted apple juice, Jell-O®, Gatorade®, and popsicles. Avoid citrus juices, such as orange and grapefruit juice. They can be irritating. Daily fluid needs are listed below:
 1. Age 0 - 2 years: 16 ounces per day
 2. Age 2 - 4 years: 24 ounces per day, and
 3. Age 4 years and older: 32 ounces per day.
- Stay with your child if he or she is using a straw. Your child may drink from a bottle.
- Give your child soft foods when he or she is ready. Examples are spaghetti, macaroni, mashed potatoes, pudding, pancakes, and scrambled eggs. You may also give milk and ice cream.
- Do not give dry or crusty food, such as potato chips, crackers, bacon, dry toast, tacos, pizza, and pretzels for 14 days after surgery.
- Do not give any hot foods. Keep all meals cool-warm.
- After 14 days, your child may return to his or her usual diet.
- An older child may benefit from chewing gum (2-3 days after surgery) to keep the surgical area moist and nearby muscles from cramping.

PAIN

- Ear pain may happen after a tonsillectomy and/or adenoidectomy. Typically this discomfort is referred from the throat and not from the ears.
- Give liquid acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Acetaminophen comes as a tablet, caplet, and liquid forms. It is used to relieve mild to moderate pain and to reduce fever. It is very important to take acetaminophen exactly as directed by your doctor. Follow the directions on the package and ask your doctor or pharmacist

to explain any part you do not understand. Do not take more or less of it than prescribed by your doctor. Do not take it any more often than prescribed by your doctor. **DO NOT GIVE IF PRESCRIBED LORTAB. IF NO LONGER USING LORTAB AND WISH TO USE TYLENOL PLEASE SPACE OUT 6 HOURS BETWEEN LAST DOSE OF LORTAB OR TYLENOL.**

- It is not uncommon for children to experience a worsening of pain and difficulty swallowing three or four days after surgery. Drinking lots of fluids during the first few days after surgery helps to avoid this discomfort. Encourage your child to actively swallow. Using the swallowing muscles as soon as possible helps prevent them from getting stiff.
- Your child's doctor may prescribe acetaminophen (Tylenol) with codeine or acetaminophen with hydrocodone (Lortab) for pain relief. Give this pain medicine as prescribed and instructed by your doctor and/or nurse. **Taking codeine or hydrocodone for a short period of time is safe and is not habit-forming.**
- **Never give aspirin as it may increase the risk of bleeding.** Some examples of trade names of products that contain aspirin are Bayer®, Bufferin®, Anacin®, St. Joseph's®, and Alka-Seltzer®. Some examples of trade names for products that contain ibuprofen are Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®, and Pediaprofen®.

ACTIVITY

- Please plan quiet activities for the first 14 days at home or home-like settings. Your child does not need to stay in bed.
- Have your child avoid “active” outdoor activities or rough play for 14 days after surgery. No gym, bicycling, baseball, basketball, dance lessons, or rollerblading, etc.

RETURN TO SCHOOL OR DAY CARE

- **The risk of bleeding from a tonsillectomy is dramatically reduced after 14 days. For this reason if your child experiences any bleeding he or she will need to go directly to the emergency room.**
- We do not ask that your child be kept out of school or day care for 14 days after surgery. Your child may return to school or day care before 14 days only if he or she is comfortable *AND* the school or day care is willing and prepared to help your child if there is sudden bleeding. If you decide with the school or day care to allow the child to return early, the following are important:
 - Absolutely no participation in physical education (PE) and “active” outdoor activities until after 14 day post-surgery.
 - A parent or caregiver should be immediately available to take the child to the emergency room if bleeding occurs.

FEVER

- Children may develop post-surgical fevers if they do not drink enough liquids. Fever may also be a sign of infection.
- A slightly raised temperature is common for the first 3 days after surgery. Check your child's temperature if he or she feels warm
- Call your child's surgeon if his or her temperature goes above 101°F by mouth or 102°F rectally.

THROAT CARE

- Mouth odor is common after removal of tonsils and/or adenoids. Drinking extra fluid can help decrease it. Do not give your child cough drops or hard candy.
- Do not use mouth rinses or gargles, such as Scope® or Listerine®. They may irritate the throat. Some throat clearing, crying, and coughing are common after this operation. Try to comfort your child when this occurs.

CONTACT US:

- On weekdays from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, call our office (405) 608-8833.
- In the evening after 4:30 PM and on weekends, and holidays, call the after-hours answering service (405) 359-0688. The doctor is available for emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.