



## POSTOPERATIVE CARE AFTER ADULT TONSILLECTOMY

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

You may experience lightheadedness, dizziness, and sleepiness due to anesthesia. For the next 24 hours:

1. A responsible person should be with you at home.
2. Do NOT drive a car, operative machinery or power tools.
3. Do NOT drink any alcoholic beverages, including beer or wine.
4. Do NOT sign important papers or make important decisions.

### DIET:

1. You are encouraged to drink 6-8 glasses of liquids every day (water, juice, jello, popsicles, etc.). Avoid citric acid beverages. Prevention of dehydration is important and improves pain control and healing.
2. Advance to a soft diet as tolerated (mashed potatoes, pasta, scrambled eggs, pudding, etc.). You may have a poor appetite for up to a week following surgery.
3. Avoid scratchy foods (toast, crackers, chips, popcorn, or pizza crust) for 2 weeks.

### MEDICATIONS:

1. Complete the entire course of prescribed antibiotics.
2. Use the prescribed pain medication routinely for the first few days after surgery. If the pain medication causes stomach irritation, give it with a small amount of food or drink.
3. Throat pain may be improved with sore throat lozenges, ice chips, cool compresses to the neck, or chewing gum. You may wish to take pain medication 15-30 minutes prior to meals.
4. Ear pain is a common complaint 3-4 days after surgery and represents referred pain from the throat. Place a warm water bottle next to the ear and give pain medication as needed.
5. As throat pain improves, you may alternate with or change to a non-aspirin pain medication, such as acetaminophen or Tylenol. Please DO NOT give aspirin, motrin, ibuprofen, aleve, advil, etc.
6. You may take an OTC cough medication or decongestant as needed.

### ACTIVITY:

1. Avoid strenuous activity, aerobic activity or lifting more than 20 pounds for 2 weeks after surgery.
2. Sleep with your head elevated on 2 pillows for several days following surgery.
3. You may miss up to 2 weeks of work. If you are feeling well enough, you may return to work in 5-7 days with light duty work restrictions for up to 2 weeks.
4. Avoid contact with people that have colds or upper respiratory infections if possible.

### WOUND CARE:

1. A gray-white membrane will form where tonsils were removed. This will gradually disintegrate. Bad breath is common. Gentle mouth rinses with warm salt water may be helpful.
2. The uvula will commonly swell like a grape after surgery. Cold beverages, popsicles, and ice packs on the throat help. This gradually improves during the first week.
3. **IF THERE IS ANY BRIGHT RED BLEEDING FROM THE MOUTH OR THROAT, PLEASE GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM AND NOTIFY YOUR DOCTOR.**
4. A low-grade fever is common following surgery. Take pain medication or Tylenol as needed.

**FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT:** in 3-4 weeks. Call the office at 334-3370 to schedule an appointment.

**CALL 334-3370** if any of the following occur:

1. Bright red bleeding from the nose, mouth, or throat.
2. Dehydration (not drinking fluids, dark urine, infrequent urination).
3. Persistent nausea or vomiting.
4. Temperature of 102°F or higher.
5. Productive or persistent cough.

Susan L. Urben, M.D. • W. David Tom, M.D.

Prashant Vivek, M.D.

**O T O L A R Y N G O L O G Y , H E A D A N D N E C K S U R G E R Y**  
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TEL: 541.334.3370 • FAX: 541.334.3372 • 1007 HARLOW RD., SUITE 310 • SPRINGFIELD OR 97477