

# Tonsillectomy

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Tonsils are specialized lymph tissue and are located in the back of the mouth. By acting as a filter, the tonsils remove bacteria from the air we breathe and help the body defend itself against infection and disease.

On occasion, the tonsils can begin to malfunction. When this occurs, the tonsils can be a source of chronic throat discomfort. The tonsils can swell and interfere with breathing, and can even affect speech. When these conditions are present, it may be advisable to remove the tonsils in an operation known as a tonsillectomy.

In addition to routine surgical care mentioned in the booklet, tonsillectomy patients may experience the following:

- **Discomfort:** The first 24 hours are usually the most painful. The physician may prescribe a combination of IV medication and oral medication to help with the pain. It is important to take the pain medication on a scheduled basis for the first couple of days, to minimize pain. When patients have good pain control, they are more likely to drink and eat and thus heal faster.
- **Nausea:** Occasionally patients will be nauseated following a tonsillectomy. Should this occur, the physician can prescribe a medication to help alleviate the symptoms.
- **Bleeding/Drainage:** Occasionally there is a small amount of blood noted around the nostrils when returning from the recovery room. Should bleeding occur after discharge, be sure to contact the physician.
- **Dismissal:** Most tonsillectomy patients are able to go home the same day of the surgery. Occasionally, patients may spend the night in the hospital.

## Home care:

- **Activity:** No vigorous activity until seen at follow-up appointment
- **Diet:** Encourage fluids. Water, soft drinks, juice, and popsicles are good choices. May have solid foods as patient resumes interest. Usually bland types of food are tolerated better than spicy, acidic foods.
- **Pain control:** A pain medication will most likely be prescribed. It is important to take pain medication, especially if the patient is not drinking very well.

→ **Follow-up appointment:** This will be scheduled with the physician for 1 – 2 weeks after discharge.

**Warning Signs:**

Call your physician if any of these occur:

1. If the patient has post-operative bleeding. This may occur in a small number of cases during the healing process.
2. If a patient is unable to drink fluids and is becoming dehydrated.
3. Severe pain that is not relieved with pain medication.

Revised 2/07