

CENTRAL OHIO EAR, NOSE AND THROAT, INC.

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TONSILLECTOMY AND ADENOIDECTOMY

Your doctor has recommended Tonsillectomy with or without Adenoidectomy (T&A). This is recommended for a variety of reasons that your physician discussed with you. The surgery is one of the most common procedures performed in the United States on both adults and children.

Your tonsils are located in the back of your throat right above your tongue on the sides. The adenoids are located above the soft palate (the punching bag in the back of the throat). We are often asked if the tonsils can grow back. The tonsils we remove do not grow back but occasionally the small tonsils on the back of the tongue will enlarge and can be seen where the other tonsils used to be. It is impossible to remove all of the adenoids from the throat. In surgery we remove the majority of them but in certain situations like allergies, smoking and recurrent infections, the remaining adenoids may enlarge and need to be removed again.

The night before your surgery we ask that you eat a normal meal before 7:00pm and drink plenty of liquids up to midnight then nothing afterwards. This is to prevent regurgitation of your food or liquids into the back of your throat and possibly down into your lungs when you undergo anesthesia.

The Anesthesiologist (the doctor putting you to sleep) will talk to you the day of surgery about their part in the case. Children will probably go to sleep with laughing gas and then the doctor will insert an IV. Adults will most likely receive the IV first and then be put to sleep with medications.

Once asleep, the doctor will remove your tonsils and/or your adenoids. This will take anywhere from 10-30 minutes depending on the individual case. After the case you will go to the recovery room and then to your hospital room.

Depending upon your situation and your doctor, you may be able to go home the night of your surgery only if you are able to eat and drink food and you are not vomiting. Sometimes we need to keep you or your child overnight. We will release you in the morning after breakfast. If your child needs to spend the night, a parent or adult relative can stay with them in the room.

YOU WILL HAVE A SORE THROAT!!!

Depending upon each individual case, it may be a minor sore throat vs. the worst sore throat of your life. It is very important that you try to eat and drink as much as possible because this is what helps you heal faster and it will actually help with your pain.

Your doctor will give you pain medicines to help with the discomfort. Depending on their age and weight, children are given liquid Tylenol with or without Codeine. Adults are usually given pills because the dose is stronger and easier to take. It is OK to crush your pain pills and mix them in pudding or applesauce so they are easier to swallow.

Children tend to do better than adults especially if they had chronic a sore throats before surgery. It may be necessary to take pain medication every 4-6 hours for the first 3-5 days to help relieve the discomfort. This is especially true in children who do not like to eat when their throat is sore. This may require you waking up to take your pain medicine in the middle of the night.

Your doctor may send you home with an antihistamine (Benadryl) or an antibiotic depending on your doctor's preference. Take them as prescribed until the medicine is gone.

It cannot be stressed enough. **It is VERY important that you eat and drink after your surgery.** This will not be easy. It is important to keep yourself well-hydrated to prevent dehydration. Dehydration will make you feel worse and it will increase the amount of pain that you have. Sometimes it is better to eat frequent small meals (all day long) instead of 3 larger meals. Snacking constantly on chips, pretzels, pudding, sherbet, etc. followed by sipping fluids is usually best. It is OK to chew gum and suck on hard candy.

Please avoid dairy products with fat in them because they tend to thicken the mucus in the back of your throat. It is OK to drink fat free milk and eat fat free ice cream. Also, it is OK to drink through a straw as long as the liquids are thin like Kool-Aid instead of thick like a shake. If you would like to have a shake, eat it with a spoon.

If you are not eating or drinking, the scabs in the back of your throat where your tonsils used to be can fall off early and lead to bleeding. You may notice a small amount of blood in your saliva after the surgery – that is OK. If you start to spit or throw up bright red blood or blood clots, you need to call the office. You may have a post-op tonsil bleed that we will need to control. Depending on your age and situation, this may require cauterization in the emergency department or in surgery under a general anesthetic.

Expect ear pain in one or both ears about 3-5 days after surgery. This is called “referred pain” because of the healing process in your throat. Rarely is it because of an ear infection. The pain will usually resolve with your pain medicine.

If you look into your throat where your tonsils used to be, you will see the whitish yellow scabs about 5-7 days after surgery. This is part of the normal healing process and not an infection.

It takes up to 2 weeks for the tonsil area to heal after surgery. For this reason we ask that you rest at home for the first week. Children should stay home from school for one week. After the first week you can slowly get back into your normal routine (school, work or daycare) with no strenuous activity for an additional week. This means no heavy lifting, sports, or musical instruments like horns for the second week.

You will need to call and make an appointment to see your surgeon two weeks after the operation. You can be seen in the same office you were seen in prior to the surgery.

As always, if you have any questions about the surgery or develop any problems after the surgery, please call the office and the nurse or the answering service will get a hold of your surgeon or whoever is on call.