

Patient Information

After a Tonsillectomy or Adenoidectomy

Ear, Nose & Throat

Introduction

Caring for Yourself After Your Operation

It is normal to have a sore throat after your operation. The following advice will help your recovery and reduce the risk of complications.

Eating and Drinking

- Try to return to a normal diet as soon as possible. Eating regular foods helps your throat heal.
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day, even if swallowing is uncomfortable. Keeping well hydrated is an important part of your recovery and can help reduce pain and prevent dehydration.
- Avoid blackcurrant juice, as its colour can make it difficult to tell if you are bleeding from your throat.
- You may find it more comfortable to avoid very hot foods and drinks, spicy foods, and alcohol until your throat starts to feel better.

Pain Relief

- Take your pain relief medication regularly, exactly as prescribed, even if your throat feels comfortable at the time. Keeping your pain under control will make it easier to eat and drink.
- It is normal for throat pain to become worse around 5 to 7 days after your operation before it starts to improve. This happens as the throat heals and is an expected part of your recovery.
- Some pain relief medicines contain codeine, which can cause constipation. To help prevent this:
 - Drink plenty of fluids.
 - Eat fruit and foods that are high in fibre.
- If constipation becomes troublesome, speak to your pharmacist, GP or another healthcare professional, who may recommend a mild laxative.

Blood-Thinning Medication

If you usually take blood-thinning medication (anticoagulants), your healthcare team will tell you when it is safe to restart it after your operation.

What to Expect

- Ear pain is common after a tonsillectomy. This is normal and is caused by pain from your throat being felt in your ears. It does not usually mean there is a problem with your ears.
- You may notice white or cream-coloured patches where your tonsils were removed. This is a normal part of healing and does not usually mean you have an infection.
- You may have bad breath while your throat is healing. This is common and usually improves as your throat recovers.
- Sneezing, coughing and gently blowing your nose will not normally affect your recovery.
- You may shower or bathe as normal, brush your teeth as usual, and carry out light daily activities as you feel able.

Ongoing Care

- Gargling gently with warm salt water after meals may help keep your mouth feeling fresh. Dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a tumbler of warm water.
- Rest is important during the first two weeks after your operation.
- Avoid returning to work, school or college, strenuous exercise and contact sports during this time.
- It is also recommended that you avoid crowded public places where possible, as this may reduce your risk of catching an infection while you are recovering.

When to Seek Medical Advice

Please contact your GP, NHS 111, or attend your nearest Accident & Emergency (A&E) Department if you experience:

- A high temperature (fever) or signs of infection, such as increasing pain, swelling, redness or discharge.
- Difficulty drinking enough fluids or signs of dehydration, such as passing very little urine, feeling dizzy, or having a very dry mouth.
- Bleeding from your throat after you have left hospital.

Important

Bleeding after a tonsillectomy is not normal and should always be taken seriously.

If you notice more than a teaspoon of fresh blood from your mouth or throat, or you are coughing up or vomiting blood:

- Go immediately to your nearest Accident & Emergency (A&E) Department.
- If the bleeding is heavy, does not stop, or you feel faint or unwell, call 999 immediately.

Advice After a General Anaesthetic

A general anaesthetic can affect your memory, concentration and reaction times for up to 24–48 hours after your operation.

If you are discharged home on the day of your surgery, a responsible adult should stay with you for at least the first 24 hours.

For the first 24–48 hours, you should avoid:

- Driving.
- Drinking alcohol.
- Smoking.
- Operating machinery or using potentially dangerous equipment, including kitchen appliances.
- Signing important or legal documents.

If You Have Any Questions

If you have any concerns after your surgery, please contact the Alexandra Day Surgery Unit on: 01279 973484 or 01279 973482

If you need information about your follow-up appointment, please contact the Appointments Team on: 01279 827391

If you would like this leaflet in another language or format, or you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net