

TONSILLECTOMY

POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS



Norwest ENT
Group

Leaving the hospital

1. If you have not already been given a postoperative appointment, please ring and arrange a visit for approximately 6 weeks after surgery.

2. Any medication you are prescribed, should be taken as directed on the bottle. You will usually be given a prescription for pain killers and antibiotics.

Eating and Drinking

It is very important to maintain adequate hydration after the operation. Make sure to drink lots of water (more than 2 litres per day for adults or 80 mL/ kg / day for children). You may find the citric acid in fruit juices irritating, milk based products are most soothing. Gatorade and other electrolyte drinks may also help.

There are no dietary restrictions after the surgery. Alkaline and cool foods (such as ice cream) may be most comfortable for the first 24 hours. After this period you should return as soon as possible to a normal diet.

Take care in the first 2 weeks as hot, spicy and acid based foods will hurt. If you are considering juices try diluting them 1 part to 4 parts water to reduce the acidity.

The sooner you return to a normal diet, the less chance there is for infection to develop and therefore the less risk for bleeding after the surgery.

Gargling

On your way home try and pick up some hydrogen peroxide based mouth gargling solution available over the counter from the chemist (eg. colgate palmolive sells a suitable version). 10 mLs gargled every 8 to 12 hours for the first 14 days is recommended for adults. For children < 12 years old this is not recommended.

Pain Management

- Paracetamol (panadol) 500mg tablets 2 tablets four times a day.
- Oxycodone tablets when required and as prescribed.
- Difflam or Cepacaine gargles 3 to 4 times a day.
- If these measures are not controlling your pain then fill the tramadol prescription and use that as well as the medications above.

Nausea and Vomiting

While it is not uncommon to get some nausea and or vomiting after a tonsillectomy it is not usually severe or long lasting. If you find you have persistent nausea and vomiting then have the ondansetron prescription filled. These are small wafers that you dissolve under your tongue. If after 24 hours of taking the ondansetron you are unable to keep fluids down you should contact your anaesthetist or Dr Patel as you may then require intravenous fluids.

Please note:

1. THROAT PAIN is normal for 21 days after the surgery. The pain is usually tolerable in the first 3 days and then worsens to a crescendo around day 6 to 9 after the operation. Once this peak is reached then the pain gradually decreases daily until you can comfortably eat around day 14 after the operation.

2. EAR PAIN is normal after this surgery. The pain is usually a deep ache and is due to referred pain. The same nerve that supplies the throat supplies the ear and therefore the throat inflammation translates into ear throat and ear pain.

3. BLEEDING from either the nose or throat may occur in 5% of patients. This is usually if oral intake has been poor and infection is developing. If minor bleeding occurs increase the peroxide gargling to 4 times a day and try and eat and swallow more frequently to clear the infected slough over the tonsil beds. If heavy bleeding occurs ie. more than half a cup full, please contact your doctor.

4. DO NOT perform any heavy lifting (more than 15 kilograms) or vigorous physical activity for three weeks after surgery.

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