



# Tampa Bay Pediatric E.N.T.

## TONSILLECTOMY INSTRUCTIONS

You or your child is scheduled to have a tonsillectomy and possibly an adenoidectomy as well. Tonsils are 2 masses of tissue in the back of the throat. Adenoids are a single mass of tissue above the tonsils and behind the nasal opening. Tonsils and adenoids are removed under general anesthesia. They are removed by the surgeon through the mouth. Tonsil and adenoid removal does not require the placement of stitches. There is no evidence of surgery on the outside of the nose, face or mouth.

### BEFORE SURGERY:

Do not give your child any food or drink after midnight the night before surgery. **Never** use Aspirin or Ibuprofen containing medicines (Advil, Motrin) for a full 14 days prior to surgery.

### AFTER SURGERY:

**PAIN:** Severe sore throat pain is common and expected after tonsil surgery. Adenoid removal also causes some pain but it is much less severe. A child will usually complain of sore throat pain for several days after the operation. It usually improves with time, but sometime changes in quality on the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> day after surgery. At this time some children complain of worsening pain that is localized behind the ears. This is normal; it does not usually represent an ear infection and it improves with time.

**DIET:** It is very important to encourage the intake of fluids. Drinking plenty of fluids will prevent dehydration. By keeping the throat moist, liquids will decrease the discomfort after the surgery. The best choice of liquids is water or Gatorade. Milk or dairy products are okay but may increase the thickness of the saliva. The day of surgery, your child needs to be on a soft diet. This includes foods such as Jell-O, soft eggs, mashed potatoes, pudding and soft cereals such as oatmeal and grits. Please avoid dry, hard or scratchy foods that are extremely hot in temperature. Each child is different and will return to a normal diet over the next several days. **Remember, the more liquids the better!**

**ACTIVITY:** Please refrain from any strenuous or vigorous physical activity for a full fourteen days after surgery. This includes swimming, running, climbing, lifting heavy weights, playing musical instruments and bicycle riding. A child should be closely supervised after surgery. When they return to the office two weeks after surgery, we will clear them to return to normal physical activity.

**MEDICATIONS:** A prescription for a liquid narcotic pain medication will be given to use as needed. Regular Tylenol (acetaminophen) can also be used for pain. Again, **NEVER** give aspirin or Ibuprofen containing products (Advil, Motrin, and Pediaprofen) for a full two weeks after surgery. If you need to refill the pain medication, please call the office during business hours.

**FEVER:** It is very common to have a low-grade (less than 101° F) for several days after surgery. You should take or give Tylenol for the fever. If a high fever occurs, or if fever persists beyond this point period please call the office.

**BLEEDING:** If there is any bright red bleeding from the nose or mouth, please call the office.

**HEALING:** The spaces from where the tonsils were removed heal in a predictable way. Several days after surgery, a membrane forms there. It looks like a moist scab that is white, gray or yellow in color. It may be associated with a bad odor from the nose or mouth. As the area continues to heal, the body reabsorbs this membrane. It does not represent an infection of this area.

**INABILITY TO DRINK:** If the patient refuses or is unable to take liquids by mouth please call the office.

**CONSTIPATION:** General anesthesia and pain medication may have a constipating effect. It is not uncommon for the bowels to be a little irregular after surgery. Gentle laxatives such as milk of magnesia can be given to soften the stool.

**FOLLOW UP:** We request a follow-up visit to the office about 21 days after the surgery. In most cases, a child can return to school about seven to ten days after surgery as long as vigorous physical activity is avoided for a full 14 days.

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