



Care Of Patient At Home After Tonsillectomy & Adenoidectomy

Pain

At the completion of the tonsillectomy surgery, your doctor injects the surgical area with a local anesthetic which will allow a more comfortable period when awakening in the recovery room and for the next 4-6 hours. After anesthesia, your child may vomit two or three times. This is not unusual. After this, as a rule, most patients are expected to have moderate to severe throat pain for the first few days. The pain should gradually improve with a slight relapse on the fifth to seventh day after surgery, when the scabs on the tonsil beds are falling off.

Pain Management

You will be given a prescription for a liquid pain medication the day of surgery. Take the medication as directed on the bottle - do not exceed the recommended doses.

Children - Tylenol with Codeine elixir - 12mg/5ml (as directed on bottle depending on age.) For children under the age of 6 years, plain Tylenol liquid, available "over the counter" may be used at one and a half times the recommended dosage.

Adults - Tylenol with Codeine elixir - 12mg/5ml
Lortab elixir - 7.5mg/15ml

Since Tylenol with Codeine and Lortab elixir contain alcohol it may cause throat burning. If this is a problem, especially with younger children, try diluting the medication with another liquid. Side effects from Codeine and Lortab include stomach ache, nausea, and constipation. Should these occur, try reducing the dose slightly, adding regular liquid Tylenol. Try not to take these medications on an empty stomach.

As your sore throat improves you may switch to Tylenol, liquid or chewable tablets which are available "over the counter." Follow the dosage instructions on the package. It is very important to remember that you should not be taking aspirin or any anti-inflammatory drugs, such as Aleve, Motrin, Advil, etc., for 14 days before or at anytime during your recovery period. These medications act as blood thinners and could cause increased bleeding during or after surgery. Tylenol is acceptable at any time prior to surgery. For ear pain that often occurs after tonsillectomy, chewing gum (if appropriate for age) will help.

Diet

Approximately 20 minutes after administration a dose of pain medication, encourage the drinking of fluids. At this time you should be receiving a good effect from the pain medication and you must take advantage of this. Fluid intake is the single most important consideration for anyone following this surgery!!

If fluid intake is not adequate you may suffer with increased pain, fatigue and even dehydration. Children should drink at least 24 to 64 ounces of fluid per day. (NO STRAWS!)

For the first one or two days, you may have cold liquids which include ice chips, water, non-carbonated beverages, Jell-O water, Gatorade, and popsicles. If possible try to avoid liquids containing red dye for the first 24 hours after surgery, so the red color is not confused with any bleeding. Avoid citrus drinks or soda because of the acid content. Avoid milk and milk products for the first few days as these tend to increase mucous production in the nose and throat. Sherbert, Jello-O, custard, pudding and pudding pops are acceptable and soothing.

Flat, room temperature carbonated beverages are also acceptable.

It will be difficult to keep you your caloric intake for the first few days and some weight loss will probably occur. Just remember to continue pushing fluids to avoid dehydration.

On the second or third day following surgery, you may have lukewarm, soft foods such as noodles, mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs, soggy cereal, cooked cereal, soups, applesauce and pancakes with syrup. You **MUST AVOID** any crusts, and all hard, crunchy foods such as chips, bacon, popcorn, nuts. No hot liquids or spicy foods for 2 weeks after surgery. As a general rule, do not give you child anything which is too hot or too cold.

After all meals drink a full glass of water to loosen any food particles which might stick to the raw surgical area. Bad breath may be noticeable. Gentle tooth brushing is allowed.

Bleeding

Blood stained mucus in the mouth and throat is normal for the first 2 or 3 days. It is not uncommon to actually vomit some blood which has been swallowed. Harsh coughing and clearing should be avoided. It is relatively uncommon to have any appreciable amount of bleeding after returning home, but when it does occur; the most common time period is the 5th to 7th day after surgery. Usually this amounts to spitting or coughing out several blood clots or a teaspoonful of bright red blood over a period of 20 to 30 minutes. This may occur from the nose as well as the mouth. If bleeding is profuse at any time, or lasts more than 30 minutes, please call the office immediately.

Activity

Children should be very quiet on the first day at home - up and about the house on the second day. No rough-housing or strenuous play for 2 full weeks after surgery. Quiet outside play, if weather permits, is fine after the second day. **DO NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL OR WORK FOR AT LEAST TWO WEEKS AFTER A TONSILLECTOMY AND ONE WEEK FOR ADENOIDECTOMY, YOUR FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT WILL BE 2 WEEKS POST-OPERATIVELY.**

Antibiotic

Fever

Speech

If your child should experience difficulty breathing, bleeding that you feel is excessive, persistent nausea or vomiting, pain that is unusual, swelling, or fever, please contact the Physicians' Answering Service (24 hours) at (708) 216-8000 and/or call the Loyola University Medical Center Emergency Department at (708) 216-3882, or go to an emergency room which is closet to you.

Patient verbalizes understanding of the above instructions.