



Post-Op Tonsillectomy

After tonsillectomy, there are several aspects of care that are important. The first is hydration. Hydration is very important during the healing period. This should consist of ample liquids (juices, milk, and sports drinks) to ensure urination at least twice daily. Adequate urine output varies with age and size of the patient but this is a reasonable starting point.

Solid food intake can begin as soon as the patient can tolerate, but this usually lags behind liquid intake. Foods should be soft and cool initially. Hard, sharp, or brittle foods such as chips, peanuts, and popcorn should be avoided for at least 2 weeks. These foods may dislodge healing crusts and result in bleeding. Ice cream, milkshakes, and popsicles are fine and often soothe the site of discomfort.

Pain control should consist of regular doses of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or a prescribed narcotic pain medicine. Pain control often has to be tailored to the individual patient. Narcotics can cause nausea and vomiting, especially early in the post-operative period when lingering effects of general anesthesia are present. They should be taken with food or fluids to minimize nausea and vomiting. Medications that reduce nausea and vomiting, such as Phenergan, may be prescribed by your physician.

Low-grade fever is normal after tonsillectomy. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be used for fever reduction. Narcotic pain medicines are usually combined with acetaminophen so they too reduce fever. Rarely, high fever may be indicative of a more serious problem. Contact your physician for fever greater than 101.5 F which does not respond to Tylenol or your pain medicine.

Bleeding occurs in approximately 2-4% of patients after tonsillectomy. If this occurs, it is typically 5-8 days after surgery when the crust in the throat falls off. For bleeding that is more than 3-4 tablespoons and does not respond to gargled ice water and ice pack to the neck, contact your doctor to determine the next appropriate step. If this occurs after hours, please call our office number (512) 458-6391 to reach the doctor on call.

Please schedule an appointment to see your doctor two weeks after surgery.