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TONSILLECTOMY WITH ADENOIDECTOMY

About the Surgery

- Tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy are performed under general anesthesia and typically last less than one hour.
- Most patients can go home the same day following surgery.
- Some patients may require overnight observation in the hospital, depending on age, medical history, or recovery from anesthesia.

What to Expect During Recovery

- Recovery from tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy lasts a full two weeks.
- It is normal to experience ups and downs during this time, with peak pain often occurring around 7–10 days after surgery.
- Common and expected symptoms include:
 - Pain with swallowing
 - Nasal congestion
 - Snoring
 - Mucus drainage
 - Fever
 - Ear pain
 - Bad smell from the nose and mouth
 - Headache
 - Neck pain
 - Temporary change in voice
 - White or yellow membranes (“scabs”) at the back of the throat
- These findings are all normal parts of healing.
- Adenoidectomy alone generally involves a much milder and shorter recovery.

Pain Management and Medications

- Pain is usually well controlled with over-the-counter Tylenol (acetaminophen) which may be given every 4 hours as needed.
- The patient may begin taking Motrin (ibuprofen) the day **AFTER** surgery once nightly at bedtime.
- Most patients will be prescribed a steroid medication (prednisolone or prednisone) which they **begin taking three days after surgery**.
 - It is taken twice daily for 5 days.
 - The steroid is taken in addition to Tylenol and helps reduce inflammation and support healing.
 - It is common for pain to temporarily increase after the steroid course is completed.
- If your child underwent adenoidectomy alone, ibuprofen may be alternated with Tylenol after the steroid course is completed.

Hydration and Diet

- Staying well hydrated is the most important part of recovery.
- Dehydration is the most common complication after this surgery and increases the risk of bleeding.
- Encourage and insist on frequent fluid intake, even if your child does not feel like eating.
- Acceptable fluids include:
 - Water
 - Juice (non-citrus)
 - Gatorade
 - Milk
 - Ice pops
 - Ice cream
 - Jell-O
- If your child underwent tonsillectomy, they must remain on a soft diet for the full two weeks.
- If your child had adenoidectomy alone, there are no dietary restrictions.

Post-Tonsillectomy Dietary Suggestions

After a tonsillectomy, your child's diet should gradually progress as comfort allows:

- **Day 1:**
 - Clear liquids such as water and non-citrus juices
- **Days 1–2:**
 - Cold, soothing foods such as:
 - Popsicles
 - Ice cream
 - Frozen yogurt
- **As your child feels better:**

- Soft, bland foods that are easy to chew and swallow, including:
 - Soft noodles or pasta
 - Macaroni and cheese
 - Mashed potatoes
 - Scrambled eggs
 - Yogurt
 - Pudding or Jell-O
 - Soup (room temperature)
 - Canned or cooked fruits
- **After 10 days:**
 - Children may slowly return to a normal diet, as tolerated

Avoid the following foods during recovery:

- Hot, spicy, rough, or scratchy foods such as:
 - Potato chips
 - Pretzels
 - Popcorn
 - Toast
 - Dry cereal
 - Pizza crust
- Acidic or spicy foods and drinks:
 - Orange or grapefruit juice
 - Tomatoes
- Red-colored foods or popsicles, which can resemble blood and cause unnecessary concern

Activity and Return to School

- Your child may return to school or daycare when you feel they are well enough, typically 5 to 14 days after surgery.
- Whether at home or school, physical activity must be limited for 14 days, including:
 - Gym class
 - Recess
 - Running or rough play

Precautions

- Between days 5 and 10 after surgery, the throat scabs will loosen.
- A small amount of blood-tinged saliva or slight oozing can be normal.
- If there is a large amount of blood, or bleeding does not stop within 1–2 minutes, go **immediately** to the nearest emergency room and have emergency personnel call our office.

When to Call the Office

Please contact us immediately if your child has:

- Persistent high fever that is not responsive to Tylenol
- A stiff neck
- Signs of dehydration (refusing to drink, very little urine, lethargy)
- Any bleeding concerns
- Any other symptoms that worry you

Please do not hesitate to call with any questions or concerns. There is always someone available, even after normal business hours.