

# **HOME CARE**

## **AFTER TONSILLECTOMY AND ADENOIDECTOMY**

**Mississippi ENT Surgical Associates**  
**(601) 709-7700**

**Scott E. Harrison, M.D. • Stephen F. Lee, M.D. • C. Michael Osborne, M.D.**  
**Benjamin T. Jeffcoat, M.D.**

**Tonsils and adenoids** are masses of tissue that are similar to lymph nodes. Tonsils are the two masses on the back of the throat. Adenoids are high in the throat behind the nose and the roof of the mouth (soft palate). Sometimes they become so large that they cause obstruction of the nose and mouth and need to be removed. The tonsils and adenoids are removed through the mouth, requires general anesthesia, and requires careful post-operative monitoring before a patient may be allowed to go home.

### **General Information:**

After a tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy (T&A) you or your child's throat will be sore for at least 5 days and perhaps as long as 2 weeks after surgery. For the first few days after surgery the patient must take it easy and rest frequently. Strenuous activity should be avoided. You may be able to return to limited activity within one week, with return to normal activity and diet in two weeks.

### **Activity:**

Only mild activity is allowed for two weeks after surgery. Strict bed rest is not necessary, but no strenuous activity is allowed for 10 to 14 days after surgery. Do not drive, operate dangerous machinery or power tools, drink alcoholic beverages, make important personal or business decisions, or sign any legal documents for 24 hours after surgery. Children may not participate in gym, sports, or physical education for 2 weeks after surgery. Heavy exercise, lifting, bending, swimming, bike riding, etc. should be avoided for 2 weeks. Avoid crowds as well.

### **Diet:**

It is very important to drink plenty of fluids in spite of possible discomfort. Begin with room temperature drinks such as apple juice, water, tea, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, etc. Avoid citrus juice such as orange juice or grapefruit juice as they may cause throat pain. Only soft foods are allowed for two weeks after surgery. Suggested foods include: Soft noodles, warm soup, eggs, grits, mashed potatoes, pudding, Jell-O, ice cream, etc. **DO NOT EAT:** Hard or "scratchy" foods such as potato chips or pretzels. Also, avoid hot, highly seasoned, spicy, or coarse foods. Remember, fluids are the key to a fast recovery.

### **Pain:**

Pain is to be expected after a T&A. The pain is frequently worse in the morning and may last 7 to 14 days after surgery. You or your child may also have ear pain after this type of surgery. A prescription will be provided by your doctor for medicine you should take after surgery. Aspirin and medicines that contain aspirin (Aspergum, BC Powder,

Goody's Powder, Excedrin, etc) should not be used because they may cause post-operative bleeding problems.

### **Bleeding:**

If you notice streaks of blood in your saliva or from your nose after you have gone home, you should lie down with your head elevated (head above your heart), place an ice collar under the chin, be quiet and calm, and suck on ice chips. If the bleeding does not stop within one hour or becomes severe – CALL THIS OFFICE. Late at night or on weekends there is always a physician on-call who can be reached to assist you. Most bleeding will stop on its own.

### **Fever:**

A fever (under 102) is common during the first week following surgery. Often, poor liquid intake can contribute to the fever. Taking the prescribed pain medicine and increasing the intake of fluids should treat a fever. Should the temperature go above 102 degrees, you should contact this office.

### **Healing:**

It is common for there to be a white membrane in the areas of the throat where the surgery was performed. This is a protective coating and should not be removed. Avoid gargling for the first week after surgery. Mouth odor should be expected and often can be quite offensive. The odor may last several days and can be helped by drinking plenty of fluids and eating the proper foods. Take care while brushing your teeth so the healing area in the back of the throat does not get injured.

**Medications:** You are advised to take the following medications as directed by your doctor:

1. Pain Medication    Take as directed by your doctor, only as needed to control post-operative discomfort. Children will often receive *Capital with Codeine Liquid*, as it contains no alcohol. Adults frequently receive *Tylenol with Codeine Liquid* or an alternative medication.
2. Antibiotic    Antibiotics are frequently prescribed in liquid form. Take the medication as directed until gone. Begin the day after surgery.

### **When to Call the Doctor:**

Bleeding from the throat or nose that does not stop with the above conservative measures

Fever over 102

Unable to drink liquids after 24 hours

Vomiting lasting more than 6 hours

### **Follow-Up:**

Your doctor will want to see you about 2 weeks after surgery to check your throat for healing. An appointment will be scheduled for you after surgery. The post-operative appointment is usually short.