



## Post-Operative Tonsillectomy Instructions

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After tonsillectomy, there are several aspects of care that are important. The first is hydration and nutrition. Hydration is very important the first several days after surgery. This should consist of ample liquids (juices, milk, and sport 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 solids, usually lags behind liquid intake. Foods should be soft and cool initially. Hard, sharp or brittle foods such as chips, peanuts, popcorn should be avoided for at least 2 weeks. These foods may dislodge healing crusts and result in bleeding. Ice cream, yogurt, milkshakes, pudding and popsicles are fine, often soothing the site of discomfort.

Pain control should consist of regular doses of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or a prescribed narcotic pain medicine. Aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen, Motrin, Naprosyn, Advil etc. should not be used because they increase the risk of bleeding. Pain control should be tailored to the patient and some require scheduled (every 4 hours) dosing rather than dosing based upon demand. Narcotics often 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, usually in suppository form, 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. To further address this, you should contact your physician for fever greater than 101.5 F which does not respond to Tylenol or your pain medicine.

Bleeding occurs in approximately 3-5% of patients after tonsillectomy. This usually occurs 5-8 days after surgery as a complication of healing when the crust in the throat sloughs. For bleeding that is more than a tablespoon and does not respond to gargled ice water, you should contact your physician to determine the next appropriate step. This may require a visit to the emergency department depending on the severity of the bleeding.

Please schedule an appointment to see your doctor 2-3 weeks after surgery.