

## Adult Tonsillectomy

The following instructions will help you know what to expect in the days after surgery and ensure a rapid recovery. Please call if you have any questions or concerns.

### Diet

Drink at least 2 to 3 litres of liquid daily to prevent dehydration. Add cold and soothing foods (ices, ice-cream, frozen yogurt, jelly) as required.

The more you eat and drink, the sooner the pain will subside. The aim is to eat and drink normally after the operation. If you have too much pain to eat a normal diet then take more pain relief. Icy poles and Gastrolyte are good for hydration in this situation until the pain relief medications take effect.

More solid food types such as toast should be eaten as it helps to clean the back of the throat, which will aid the healing process.

Avoid acidic foods such as orange juice.

### Activity

There are no strict rules for activity after surgery other than to avoid contact sports or heavy exertion for about 2 weeks.

Work can be resumed after two weeks for nearly all patients. You should get out of bed frequently and return to normal activity as soon as possible.

Do not travel more than 45 minutes away from Brisbane or the Gold Coast, or fly in the first 2 weeks in case of bleeding.

### Pain

For the first seven days (can be up to 14 days) following surgery, pain is to be expected. It can be quite severe. You can minimize your discomfort by:

- Ensuring adequate food and liquid intake
- Chewing your favourite sugar free gum (it exercises the jaw muscles and lubricates the throat with saliva)
- Take regular paracetamol and ibuprofen (unless contraindicated – allergy, known asthma trigger.) It is best to administer the paracetamol and ibuprofen at separate times to ensure that there is always some pain relief on board (ie stagger the doses).

There will usually also be a script for a stronger pain relief medication (oxycodone) to be used as required if pain is still not controlled. Check the prescription for dosages to administer.

### **Bad breath**

Bad breath (halitosis) is normal and is a consequence of the healing process.

### **Fever**

A low-grade fever (less than 38 degrees Celsius) following surgery may occur and should be treated with paracetamol. If the fever persists (more than two days) or if higher than 38 degrees then please call the rooms in hours. If this occurs after hours, please attend the local Emergency Department.

### **Bleeding**

Post-operative bleeding is unusual, but it can occur up to two weeks after surgery. Most bleeding is minor and you may only see a little coating of blood on the tongue.

Bleeding can be a serious issue and due to this risk, it's important you do not travel more than 45 minutes from the Toowoomba or a centre with an ENT service for 2 weeks after surgery. If there is significant bleeding following surgery present to Toowoomba Base Hospital where there is ENT support 24 hours a day. There is a significant out of pocket cost if you present to St Vincent's Emergency Department (upwards of \$400).

### **Some Things Not to Worry About:**

- A hoarse or abnormal voice may occur for several days from the anaesthesia tube and
- from a temporary stiffness of the palate.
- Vomiting may occur for up to 24 hours.
- Snoring may persist for 1-2 weeks because of temporary swelling around the tonsils.
- Ear pain may occur – this is referred pain from the healing surgical site (the ears and tonsils share common nerves). Ear pain is temporary and requires no treatment other than pain relief as required.
- Fever up to 38 degrees, and bad breath are common for several days.
- A white or grey scab or crust will form in the throat and will absorb gradually within about 2 weeks. Bad breath is to be expected during this time.

### **Follow up**

A follow-up phone call will be made for approximately 4 to 6 weeks after surgery