

Paediatric Tonsillectomy

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

Physical activities

After this surgery, children should rest but may play inside after one or two days and outside after three or four days, if they feel up to it. Strenuous physical activity following surgery is discouraged – it may increase the risk of a postoperative bleed. Children should remain off school for 2 weeks with a responsible adult.

Diet

The more your child eats and drinks, the sooner the pain will subside. Children should eat and drink normally after the operation. More solid food types such as toast should also be encouraged as it helps to clean the back of the throat, which will aid the healing process. Avoid acidic foods such as orange juice. If children have too much pain to eat a normal diet then give more pain relief. Icy poles and Gastrolyte are good for hydration in this situation until the pain relief medications take effect.

Pain

For the first seven days (can be up to 14 days) following surgery, pain is to be expected. This can usually be controlled with liquid paracetamol (4 times per day ie every 6 hours) and ibuprofen (3 times per day ie every 8 hours). 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 painkiller (oxycodone) to be used as required if pain is still not controlled. Check the prescription for dosages to administer.

Ear pain, especially with swallowing is also a common occurrence; it is not an ear infection but due to referred pain from the healing surgical site. Treat it as above. Occasionally a stiff neck may occur. Please call if neck pain reduces range of movement of neck.

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. Watch for spitting, coughing, or vomiting of blood.



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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).

Follow up

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