

Patient information

Tonsillectomy (adult)

Your Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeon has recommended that you have your tonsils removed (tonsillectomy).

The tonsils are two pieces of flesh at the back of the throat which may become infected and cause frequent sore throats. In the first few months of life tonsils are needed to help fight infection, by producing chemicals called antibodies. In later life the tonsils serve no important function.

Your operation will be under general anaesthetic and you will be unconscious throughout. The operation lasts between 20 - 30 minutes.

You will wake up from your operation in the recovery area and once you are awake you will be taken back to the ward where you will be observed on the unit for 6 hours to reduce the risk of problems occurring after discharge. We observe for excessive swallowing, coughing or vomiting of fresh blood, and this needs to be continued by you after discharge.

Your throat will be sore and you will be given painkilling medicines during your stay.

Complications

Very rarely bleeding occurs following a tonsillectomy, and usually indicates an infection of the throat. If this does occur following your discharge from hospital you should consult your GP. If the bleeding is severe attend the Emergency Department, where you will be seen by the ENT doctor on duty.

Discharge advice

Following your surgery we encourage you to drink plenty of cool fluids (non-alcoholic).

Avoid hot food and drink for 24 hours after surgery. After that eat a normal diet – little and often helps if your throat is sore. It is very important to start eating as

normally as possible as this helps the throat to heal quickly.

Rest at home for a few days.

A sore throat is normal after the operation. It is advisable to have a supply of simple painkillers such as Paracetamol and Ibuprofen at home.

You are likely to have bad smelling breath for a week after the operation. This is normal and will disappear.

About a week later you should be almost back to normal. You will normally require one week off work following the operation.

There is no routine follow-up appointment. If you have had biopsies taken and require a follow-up appointment, this will be sent to you.

See your GP if:

- There is any increase in pain
- You develop a high temperature or fever

If you have any sudden bleeding call 999 or come to the Emergency Department without delay Monday to Friday.

Please note: All weekend emergencies are treated at Addenbrooke's Hospital NHS Trust, telephone 01223 245151. After 5.00pm on Friday, should you need emergency treatment (bleeding for example) please call an ambulance and ask to be taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital Accident and Emergency Department.

If you require further advice, please contact:

- The Martin Corke Day Surgery Unit on 01284 713050 between 7.45am - 7.00pm, Monday to Friday.
- Outside of these hours contact the ENT ward on 01284 713430
- Your GP / GP out-of-hours service

Or NHS 111

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