

**Surgical Explanation: TONSILLECTOMY**

You and Dr. Ulrich are considering an operation called a tonsillectomy. Tonsils are lymph glands located on either side of the throat. Tonsillectomy is the operation by which the tonsils are removed and it requires surgical cuts in the areas of the tonsils. This operation is rarely an emergency. Delay of the operation may result in further nose, throat and ear infections; however, the chance of a serious complication from delaying the operation is quite small. The operation itself is of a relatively short duration. Complications are unlikely, but they do occasionally occur. It is possible that this operation will not help you, and a very small percentage of patients are even worse after the operation than they were prior to it. Because of these facts, Dr. Ulrich can make no guarantee as to the results that might be obtained from this operation. However, in the vast majority of patients, the result desired from the operation is achieved.

As in any operation, tonsillectomy can be complicated by bleeding and infection. Allergic or other bad reaction to one or more of the substances used in the surgery is another very rare complication. These complications can result in prolonged illness, the need for blood transfusions and very, very rarely, even death. Although the tonsillectomy complication rate is low regardless of age, adults are known to have more complications and slower recoveries than children.

There may be alternatives to this operation, such as the continued use of drug therapy. However, these alternatives carry their own risk of complications and have a varying degree of success. Therefore, in those patients in whom tonsillectomy is indicated, the operation may provide the patient with the best chance of successful treatment and the lowest risk of complications.

# What to expect after TONSILLECTOMY



## Activity & Diet

You should rest at home for the first 48 hours and “take it easy” for the first week following surgery. Activity may be gradually increased as your strength improves. Avoid any strenuous activity, coughing or clearing the throat because this may cause bleeding. **Do not travel outside the area for 2 weeks following surgery.** While a good diet is important for healing, most patients after a tonsillectomy are too uncomfortable to eat a complete diet. It is **very important** to drink fluids to prevent dehydration. Frequent, small feedings of soft foods or liquids are usually tolerated best. **Make every effort to drink 4 ounces of liquid every waking hour until normal diet is resumed.** Inadequate fluid intake may result in readmission to the hospital. Chewing is good for the healing process and is encouraged. Avoid rough, coarse, highly seasoned or spicy foods.

## Pain & Temperature

- \* It is common to have throat and/or ear pain after surgery. Throat pain may feel worse the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> day after surgery. Ear pain is due to shared pain nerves with the throat and not due to any ear problems.
- \* Avoid aspirin as this increases the possibility of bleeding. Use Tylenol (Acetaminophen) or the prescribed medication to help control the discomfort. The ear and throat pain will resolve usually in 7 to 10 days.
- \* It is normal to run a fever between 99 and 101 degrees for the first few days following surgery. If the fever does not respond to Tylenol or is over 101.5, contact our office.

## Bleeding

Once you leave the hospital **there should be no bleeding.** If after the first day you notice some pink saliva or a spot of blood in the saliva you should not be concerned. If however, bleeding is an amount similar to that received from a cut and comes from either the mouth or nose, go directly to the emergency room.

## Vomiting

Most patients will experience nausea and vomiting prior to discharge from the hospital. Rarely does this continue throughout the first night.

## General Care

Increased snoring or nasal congestion is normal after surgery and is caused by swelling in the back of the nose. Bad breath is also common and is caused by the scabs that form in the region of the surgery. Snoring, congestion and bad breath should be gone by 10-14 days after surgery. Bad breath may be improved by the use of mild salt water solution as a gargle.

## Follow-up Appointment

A follow-up appointment has been made for you. Refer to your surgery letter for date and time. If this appointment needs to be changed, please contact our office.

## Questions or Problems

If questions or problems arise during normal business hours, please do not hesitate to call the office at (810) 695-3766. For post-surgical medical issues after normal business hours, call the office at (810) 695-3766 and follow the prompts to be connected with Dr.Ulrich. If unable to connect through the office, contact Genesys information at (810) 606-5000 to have Dr. Ulrich paged.

