

Dr Ryan Sommerville BSc, MBBS, FRACS (ORL)
Dr Thomas Slaughter BSc, MBBS, FRACS (OHNS)
Dr Sarju Vasani MB Bchir MA (Cantab.) FRCS FRACS
Dr Brendan Perry BSc, MBBS, FRACS (OHNS)
Dr Jo-Lyn McKenzie MBBs (1st Hons) FRACS BPharm

18 August 2020

Adult Tonsillectomy

Tonsillectomy is a safe and effective surgical procedure that will provide you with lasting benefits. The suggestions below should help with a rapid recovery.

Diet:

Drink at least plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration. Within 1-2 days, add cold and soothing foods (ices, ice-cream, frozen yogurt, Jelly). As you feel better, add soft bland items that are easy to chew and swallow (pasta, puddings, mashed potatoes, tuna or chicken salad, macaroni and cheese). There are no foods you need to avoid but we are told that fresh tomatoes can sting.

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 one to 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 30 minutes away from Brisbane or the Gold Coast, or fly in the first 2 weeks in case of bleeding.

Pain:

There's no doubt about it: tonsillectomy does not top the list of ways to have fun. You may be in severe pain. You can, however, minimize your discomfort by:

- adequate food and liquid intake
- chewing your favourite gum (it exercises the jaw muscles and lubricates the throat with saliva)

Take **paracetamol** and **celecoxib** (Celebrex) regularly for the first 5 days.

You will usually be given a script for stronger medications such as **Targin** or **Oxycontin SR** which can both be used twice a day. **Oxycodone** (Endone) can be used every 4-6hrs for breakthrough. Other pain medications include **Xylocaine Viscous** which is a local anaesthetic mouth wash/gargle. This can help to numb the throat if you are having troubles achieving a reasonable oral intake. If using some of these stronger medications you may need some medication to help keep your bowel movements regular – Coloxyl and Senna may be helpful in this regard. **Excessive nausea** may require medications also – contact your ENT Clinics doctor for advice.

Some Things Not to Worry About:

A hoarse or abnormal voice may occur for several days from the anesthesia 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 (the ears and tonsils share common nerves), but is temporary and requires no treatment. 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.

Post-operative Bleeding:

If there is persistent or excessive bleeding you should present to your local hospital, or **if severe bleeding please call an ambulance** and they will take you to an appropriate hospital.

Fevers:

If persistent fevers or >38 Celsius, please see your local GP, or call the rooms or the on call surgeon for advice.

After Hours Assistance

If you have any urgent post surgery concerns after hours, the on call ENT Surgeon can be contacted on: 0499 330 021. ***The after hours number does not accept SMS messages, images or appointment bookings***