Tonsillectomy and/or Adenoidectomy
(Before Surgery)

Tonsils are lymph (soft) tissue located on both sides of the throat, behind the tongue. A tonsillectomy has been recommended for your child because of frequent sore throats, infections, and/or breathing problems.

Adenoids are lymph (soft) tissues that lie behind the nose where it joins the upper end of the throat. Enlarged adenoids may cause your child to have difficulty breathing through his nose and cause him to breathe through his mouth. Enlarged adenoids may lead to frequent ear infections.

A tonsillectomy is the surgical removal of the tonsils. This operation usually takes about 45 minutes.

An adenoidectomy is the surgical removal of the adenoids. This operation usually takes about 20 minutes.

Surgery and Recovery Period:

Your child will have a general anesthetic (to put him to sleep) for the surgery. After the surgery, your child will go to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) for approximately 1 hour before you will see him. During this time he will wake up from anesthesia. Once your child is awake and not having problems, the nurse will bring your child out to you. Then you and your child will go to an observation area for usually 4 to 6 hours.

Observation Stay:

While in the Observation Stay area, it is important that your child drink cool, clear fluids and take pain medication by mouth. Even if your child is having severe throat pain, he must drink a certain amount of fluids. Once your child is drinking fluids, taking pain medication and is not having nausea, vomiting, bleeding or high fever, he will be ready to go home.

Complications are not common, but can occur. The two most common complications after surgery are bleeding and infection.

Bleeding may occur anytime from the first few hours to 14 days after surgery. He may need to return to the Operating Room to stop the bleeding. Bleeding after surgery can be very serious. Although it is very rare, a child could die from bleeding.

Infection may also occur after surgery. If your child has a fever greater that 101°F (38.3°C) after taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®), call the ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) Clinic (816) 234-3040 or the Children's Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188.
General Information:

- Your child's speech may sound "nasal" following surgery. Before the surgery your child's palate closed against enlarged adenoid tissue. After the adenoids have been removed, the palate has to learn to close further towards the back of the throat. It is during this time you will notice the "nasal" sounding speech.

- Your child may complain that fluids come up into the nose when he eats or drinks. This usually stops three months after surgery. Rarely, it may require additional surgery.

- The removal of the tonsils and adenoids does not mean that your child will never experience another sore throat. It usually means they will be less frequent and less severe.

- It will be necessary for your child to miss seven days of daycare or school following a tonsillectomy and three days following an adenoidectomy. This may mean that you, as a parent, will need to make arrangements to be off from work or arrange care for your child.

- Do not use aspirin products or ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) for 3 weeks before and after surgery.

This information will be reviewed with you and your child during his pre-surgery evaluations with the ENT pediatric nurse practitioner. If you think of questions, write them down and bring them with you to your child's appointment.

Your child's pre-surgery appointment is:
__________________________ at ________________________________

If you can not keep this appointment, please call the ENT Clinic at (816) 234-3040.
Your child's surgery date is: ________________________________