



How to Care for Your Child After Tonsillectomy Surgery



IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Children's Mercy Hospital Kansas
ENT Clinic: (913) 696-8620

Children's Mercy Adele Hall Campus
ENT Clinic: (816) 234-3040

Contact a nurse after hours
and on weekends: (816) 234-3188

Emergency: **911**

Your Surgeon: _____

Primary Care Physician: _____



TONSILLECTOMY and/or ADENOIDECTOMY (T&A) SURGERY

- This is a very common and safe operation. It is the second most common surgery performed on children.
- It is normal to see white patches on the back of your child's throat. Do not remove them.
- Your child will have scabs in the back of his/her throat. The scabs will fall off on their own about seven days after surgery.

PAIN

- **Your child may have a sore throat, neck and/or ear pain for 2-3 weeks after surgery. The pain may be the worst for 3-4 days after surgery. One to two weeks after surgery, pain may worsen because the scabs are falling off.**
- It is important to control your child's pain after surgery. This helps your child drink and eat.
- Your child may have bad ear pain after surgery. Ear pain is actually pain coming from the throat. This is normal. It may last for up to three weeks after surgery. Pain medication, chewing gum or eating chewy foods (like gummy bears) should help.
- **Give your child pain medicine at set times for 2-4 days after surgery even if he/she doesn't seem to have a lot of pain. Your child's pain will be in better control if you do not skip doses. The pain will be worse if the pain medicine wears off.**
- Wake your child to give pain medicine (even at night) for the next 2-4 nights after surgery. Have him/her drink at the same time.
- Your child's pain may not be completely gone while taking the pain medicine. The goal is to make your child more comfortable. Call your ENT doctor if:
 - ◇ Your child's pain is not controlled.
 - ◇ Your child has side effects (repeated vomiting or is very sleepy) from the pain medicine.
- Write down when you give your child pain medicine and when the next dose is due. (Use the chart in the back of this booklet.)
- Have your child eat a small amount before giving the pain medicine. This helps prevent stomach upset.



- Your child will be more likely to drink 30-45 minutes after taking pain medication. It will hurt less to swallow. This is a good time to give fluids.
- Keep track of your child's bowel movements. The pain medicine may cause constipation. Have your child drink a lot to help avoid constipation.
- Your child also can use an ice pack on his/her neck to help with pain.
- Some prescription pain medicines contain acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Do not give your child additional doses of acetaminophen (Tylenol®) if your child is taking a pain medicine that contains acetaminophen.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Motrin®) can be taken together. These medications are safe to be given at the same time or different times.



BLEEDING

- There is a small chance your child may have some bleeding after the surgery. Bleeding can occur anytime from the first few hours to two weeks after surgery.
- It is okay for your child to blot/wipe his/her nose. Do not let your child forcefully blow his/her nose. This could cause bleeding.
- Your child should sneeze out of the mouth. Remind your child to keep the mouth open during sneezes.
- **Immediately take your child to the nearest Emergency Room if your child:**
 - ◇ **has red drainage from the nose, mouth or ears**
 - ◇ **vomits red blood**
 - ◇ **if you see bleeding in the throat (you may notice your child swallowing more frequently if there is bleeding).**
- **If you live within 30 minutes of the Children's Mercy Adele Hall Campus (downtown Kansas City, Mo., 2401 Gillham Road), drive your child to this Emergency Room even if you live closer to Children's Mercy Hospital Kansas.**
- **If you take your child to a hospital other than the Children's Mercy Adele Hall Campus, please ask the doctor to call the Children's Mercy ENT at (816) 234-3040.**

FLUIDS

- **It is very important your child drink a lot after surgery. This will help to decrease the pain and keeps your child healthy.**
- Be firm with your child. Encourage him/her to drink, even if he/she does not want to drink. If necessary, use rewards (like watching a movie or reading a book) and restrict activities to encourage your child to drink.
- Using a syringe, different cups or fun straws can be helpful to get your child to drink.
- The best things to drink are cool, clear liquids you can see through. You can try oral electrolyte drinks (like Pedialyte[®], Gatorade[®], or Powerade[®]), fruit juices diluted with water, popsicles or ice chips. Carbonated beverages are okay, but they may cause a burning feeling in the throat. Make the soda flat or dilute with ice. Milk products are okay, but increase mucous.
- Avoid tart fruit juices (orange, grapefruit and tomato juice).
- Below is a guide to help with how much your child should drink each hour:

Your Child's Weight	Amount of Fluids per Hour
25-40 lbs.	2 ounces (1/4 cup) every hour
41-99 lbs.	2 to 3 ounces (1/3 cup) every hour
100 lbs. and up	more than 3 ounces (1/2 cup) every hour

- Call your ENT doctor if your child:
 - ◇ vomits 2-3 times in two hours
 - ◇ does not drink for 6-8 hours
 - ◇ is not urinating or having wet diapers 2-3 times per day
 - ◇ has urine that is dark is or smells strong.





DIET

- You may start small amounts of soft foods when your child drinks well after surgery. Your child should eat soft foods for two weeks.
- Soft foods include yogurt, cooked cereal, cooked pasta, soft fruit, cooked vegetables, mashed potatoes, soups, pudding, ice cream and smoothies.
- Avoid foods that are crunchy or have sharp edges (such as chips). These foods can scrape the scabs in the back of the throat and make them bleed.
- Avoid red popsicles or foods with red dye that can look like blood in the mouth or throat.

FEVER

- A fever between 99°F (37.2°C) and 100°F (37.8°C) after surgery is normal. This is the body's way of healing.
- Call your ENT doctor if your child's temperature is 101°F (38.3°C) or higher. This can be a sign of infection or dehydration.

ACTIVITY

- Your child can return to school/daycare seven days after surgery if he/she is no longer taking pain medicine during the day.
- No matter the age of your child, he/she will need lots of attention and help for two weeks. Please arrange child care and rearrange work schedules for at least seven days. Your child may not be ready to return to school/daycare after seven days. Each child recovers at a different pace.
- No rough or active play for two weeks following surgery. This includes sports, recess and gym.
- Quiet, calm indoor activities are good.

HYGIENE

- Bad breath is common after this surgery. It may continue for several weeks even with good teeth brushing. Your child should start to carefully brush his/her teeth the day after surgery.
- Your child may bathe or shower the day after surgery.

HELPFUL REMINDERS

- **If your child is bleeding and you live within 30 minutes of the Children's Mercy Adele Hall Campus (downtown Kansas City, Mo., 2401 Gillham Road), drive your child to this Emergency Room. Even if you live closer to Children's Mercy Hospital Kansas, it is still preferred that your child be seen downtown.**
- **If you take your child to a hospital other than the Children's Mercy Adele Hall Campus, please ask the doctor to call the Children's Mercy ENT at (816) 234-3040.**
- Your child may have a sore throat, neck, and/or ear pain for 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- Give your child pain medicine at set times for 2-4 days after surgery even if he/she doesn't seem to have a lot of pain.



- It is very important your child drink a lot after surgery.
- Call your ENT doctor or the Nurse Line (after hours and on weekends) at (816) 234-3188 for any questions or concerns.
- A nurse from Children's Mercy will contact you a couple days after surgery to see how your child is doing. You may or may not have a follow-up appointment with your ENT doctor. Please contact the Children's Mercy ENT Clinic at (816) 234-3040 for any follow-up questions or concerns.
- Please visit [childrensmercy.org](https://www.childrensmercy.org) for more information. Video resources are available on the Otolaryngology page.







PAIN MEDICINE SCHEDULE

Your child should take these medications for pain:

- acetaminophen (Tylenol®) every four hours at set times for 2-4 days and then as needed

- ibuprofen (Motrin®) every eight hours as needed, do not give more than three times a day

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No Pain
No Dolor

Moderate Pain
Dolor Moderado

Worst Pain
Peor Dolor

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



0	2	4	6	8	10
Very happy, no hurt	Hurts just a little bit	Hurts a little more	Hurts even more	Hurts a whole lot	Hurts as much as you can imagine (don't have to be crying to feel this much pain)

Medication	Day of Surgery	1st Day After Surgery	2nd Day After Surgery
	Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
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Sticker Chart



Your child earns a sticker when he/she completes a task at home. This can be used for drinking a certain amount, taking medicine or other accomplishments. Place a sticker on the star. When each row is full, your child earns a prize or activity as a reward. This can be a special treat, activity together or whatever you decide!



**Prize or
Special
Activity!**



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Otolaryngology (ENT) Clinic

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