

## **PERIOPERATIVE SERVICES**

### **Post-Operative Instructions**

#### **Tonsillectomy Surgery with or without Adenoidectomy**

#### **PAIN:**

##### **What to expect as you heal:**

Your throat may be sore after your surgery. The soreness will begin to decrease after the first week. Your surgeon has prescribed some pain medication. Please use as instructed. Keeping the throat moist by drinking plenty of fluids and using an ice collar (a clean towel or sock with ice wrapped in it or a bag of frozen vegetables) are other measures to decrease discomfort.

#### **OPERATIVE SITE:**

The area in your throat where the tonsils were removed will look dark grayish in colour for the first several days. It will heal in 10 to 14 days. As the area heals this tissue falls away and you may develop bad breath and/or a bad taste in your mouth. Drink plenty of fluids, brush your teeth frequently and gargle with salt water to decrease this problem. Do not use mouthwash. It is not uncommon to vomit a small amount of old dark red blood after surgery. If you cough up bright blood (this is considered fresh new bleeding), gargle with ice water or a one part to one part solution of water and hydrogen peroxide. If this bleeding continues call your surgeon or go to the nearest emergency department.

#### **ACTIVITY:**

At first do as little as possible and get plenty of rest. You may walk and do light activities. You must not lift or do any strenuous or vigorous activity like running or sports for 2 weeks. No swimming until your surgeon permits it, usually this is in 2-3 weeks. You may bathe or shower in 24 hours, but avoid long, hot baths or showers. Do not use saunas or hot tubs for 2 weeks. Avoid extremes of hot and cold for 10 days. If you are a student or have a job that is not physically demanding you may return to work in 10 days minimum. If your job is physically demanding you may want to be off 2 to 3 weeks. Please ask your surgeon, how long you should stay off of work.



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You should not:

- Blow your nose hard
- Clear your throat
- Cough or sneeze if possible (or do it with your mouth open)
- Come in contact with people who have a cold or flu
- Take Aspirin™ (acetylsalicylic acid) or any drug containing ASA™
- Chew Aspergum™
- Take an anti-inflammatory medication such as Ibuprofen or Motrin™
- Have any hot foods or fluids
- Use straws to drink fluids

You should:

- Continue to talk, keeping your throat moving and moist is essential

### **DIET:**

After surgery, you should eat nourishing, easy to swallow fluids and soft foods. This will promote healing and lessen irritation of your throat. You may need to follow this soft, easy to swallow diet for one or two weeks while your throat heals. Here are some general guidelines:

1. Play it safe – stick to cool fluids for the first few days after your surgery. Hot temperatures may promote bleeding. Cool fluids include:
  - Juice
  - Jell-o™ products
  - Popsicles
  - Sprite™, gingerale (non cola)
  - Milk
  - Yogurt
  - Milkshakes
  - Ice cream
  - Custard
  - Pudding
  - Nutritional supplements such as Ensure™, Boost™, Carnation Instant Breakfast™
2. Emphasize fluids – drink as many cold drinks as you are able. Chewing gum can also stimulate saliva/gastric juices which helps keep the throat moist.

3. Choose soft moist foods – eat/drink only foods that are easy to swallow. Start with fluids, and add soft textured solids when your throat feel better. If necessary, puree foods in the blender or use baby foods.

Using a blender: add some liquid to the blender before adding solid food. Process 1 cup of solid food at a time. Use pureed food right away or refrigerate up to 24 hours, or freeze up to 2 months.

4. Eat or drink often in small portions – eat or drink 8 or more times per day.
5. Avoid foods that cause you pain – they may include:
  - Acidic foods such as citrus fruits and juices (fruit nectars such as peach or pear may be less irritating), any foods with tomatoes, food made with vinegar
  - Alcohol
  - Spicy foods
  - Salty foods
  - Hard or crunchy foods
  - Dry foods (crackers, toast)
6. Think “Nutrition”. Good nutrition promotes healing and helps prevent infection. Here are some tips to ensure a good intake:
  - Drink/eat often throughout the day to prevent rapid weight loss which can hinder healing
  - Include plenty of protein foods and fluids; ie: dairy products, meat, fish, poultry and eggs
  - Nutritional supplements such as Ensure™, Boost™, Carnation Instant Breakfast™ provide a convenient source of energy and protein
  - Eat/drink nutritious foods first. Do not rely only on low calorie foods such as clear soups, broth, tea, coffee and Jell-o™
7. If you are diabetic:
  - Continue taking your diabetic medication unless told otherwise by your doctor
  - When taking fluids only, drink liquids which contain starch or sugar every 1-2 hours to prevent your blood sugar from dropping too low
  - Sugar free drinks such as diet pop, broth, diet Jell-o™ may be used to provide extra fluids

- When taking soft solid foods, space meals 4-6 hours apart with snacks in between
- Monitor your blood sugar and call your surgeon/family doctor if you have any concerns

**FOLLOW-UP:**

Your surgeon will advise you if a follow-up appointment is required. If you are a Day Surgery patient, a nurse from the Day Surgery Unit may call you the day after your surgery to discuss any concerns.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Do not take Aspirin™ or any drug containing ASA™  
Do not take any anti-inflammatory medication such as  
Ibuprofen (Advil™) or Motrin™**

**Go to the nearest emergency department if you have any of  
the following:**

- Severe bleeding
- High fever (38°C or 100.4°F) and/or chills lasting more than 24 hours
- Severe pain, no relief from pain medication

Patient safety is very important to Queensway Carleton Hospital and this information is provided to you, to help inform you of your essential role in your own safety. The information contained on this sheet is not specific medical advice, nor a substitute for medical advice. For your safety, it is advised that you speak with your doctor and healthcare team about your particular healthcare needs.

Protect yourself! Clean your hands frequently and ask your healthcare providers and visitors to do the same. Clean hands saves lives.