SURGICAL 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 manage pain and discomfort. Please take Acetaminophen (Tylenol™) regularly. Your surgeon has given you a prescription for pain medication. Please take your pain medication as instructed.

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 saltwater 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 to one-part solution of water and hydrogen peroxide.

ACTIVITY:

You may walk and do light activities. You must not do any heavy lifting (greater than 10 pounds or 4.5 kg) 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, extreme hot baths or showers as this may make you dizzy or may increase risk of bleeding. 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 involves physical activity you may need to be off 2 to 3 weeks. Please speak with your surgeon as to when you may return to work.

CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE 🡪

Information is available in alternate formats upon request

**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 as sucking a straw may increase the risk of bleeding

**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 irriation 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 genereal guidelines:

1. Avoid hot beverages and food items for the first few days as they may promote bleeding. Eat all foods and drinks cold or at room temperature for the first few days. Examples incude:

* Juice
* Jell-o™ products
* Popsicles
* Sprite™, gingerale (non cola)
* Milk
* Yogurt
* Milkshakes
* Ice cream
* Custard
* Pudding
* Nurtritional supplements such as Ensure™, Boost™, Carnation Instant Breakfast™

1. Drink plenty of fluids – drink as many cold drinks as you are able. Chewing gum can also stimulate saliva/gastric juices which helps keeps the throat moist.
2. Choose soft moist foods – eat/drink only foods that are easy to swallow. Start with fluids, and add soft textured solids when your throat feels better. If necessary puree foods in the blender or use baby food.

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.

1. Eat or drink often in small portions – eat or drink 8 or more times per day.
2. 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)

1. Think “Nutrition”. Good nutrition promotes healing and helps prevent infection. Here are some tips to ensure a good intake:

* Drink/eat often thought the day to prevent rapid weight loss which can hinder healing
* Eat 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 convient sournce 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™

1. 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
* Drink sugar free drinks such as diet pop, broth, diet Jell-o™ for fluid intake
* 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 will 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™ or as instructed by your surgeon, if your surgeon has given you other instructions related to anti- inflammatory medication please follow those

**Contact your surgeon’s office or go to the nearest emergency department if you have any of the following:**

* Severe bleeding, continuous episodes of coughing up bright red blood not controlled by gargling with ice water or hydrogen peroxide
* Elevated temperature greater than (38ºC or 100.4ºF) and/or chills lasting more than 24 hours
* Severe pain, no relief from pain medication

The information contained on this sheet is provided to you and your family to help you in your recovery from this procedure. This document is not intended to replace medical advice from your doctor or healthcare team. If you require more specific/additional medical advice, contact your doctor and healthcare team about your particular healthcare needs.

Protect yourself! Clean your hands frequently using soap and water or

hand sanitizer and ask that your healthcare providers and visitors do the same." Clean hands save lives.