

# Post-Operative Tonsillectomy

## How to care for your child at home:

1. **Fluid Intake:** This is ***extremely*** important over the next several days to prevent dehydration. Encourage fluid intake throughout the day. All liquids are OK. Small amounts of fluid ***every hour*** while awake works well. If your child refuses to drink, make sure he or she has taken pain medication. Then, encourage sips of fluids every 5 minutes for 1 to 2 hours, if needed.

### Suggestions:

- Water, juice, Gatorade, soda, milk
- Milkshakes, smoothies, popsicles, ice cream
- Puddings, apple sauce, yogurt, Jell-O, soup, watermelon

### Suggested fluid intake for your child (every hour while awake):

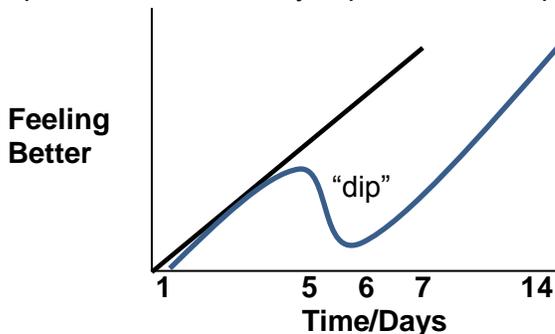
Child's Weight	Amount (fluid ounce)
< 20 lbs	2 oz
20-30 lbs	4 oz
30-40 lbs	6 oz
40-60 lbs	8 oz
> 60 lbs	8 oz

2. **Diet:** A **regular diet** can begin immediately with no restrictions. If there is a type of food that your child prefers, regardless of texture or temperature, you can feel comfortable starting it as soon as possible.

**Chewing** helps to reduce muscle spasm and promotes oral hygiene by increasing salivary flow postoperatively.

Suggestions: gum, gummy bears, fruit chews

3. **Pain:** The pain and discomfort a child experiences after a tonsillectomy varies from a few days to 14 days. The pain may be severe and can be worse at night. Generally each day is better than the previous one. Sometimes around the 5<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> day after the operation the child may experience a temporary worsening of pain ("**dip**") for 1-2 days.



***The pain control regimen will consist of a combination of Tylenol and Ibuprofen as indicated below***

**Medications:**

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) should be given every 4 hours for pain (Concentration 160mg/5mL - dose: \_\_\_\_\_mL every 4 hours)
- Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) to be given every 8 hours for pain (Concentration 100mg/5mL - dose: \_\_\_\_\_mL every 8 hours)

Acetaminophen with Ibuprofen \_\_\_\_\_ Acetaminophen \_\_\_\_\_ Acetaminophen with Ibuprofen \_\_\_\_\_ Acetaminophen  
4 hours 4 hours 4 hours

- A stronger pain medication may also be prescribed for pain that is not relieved with acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen; such as Norco, Hycet, or Tylenol with codeine. The doctor will describe the regimen for these medications.

**Do not** use any other over the counter pain medications, **specifically no aspirin**, as it can increase the risk of bleeding.

Antibiotics may be prescribed.

4. **Activity:** Resume **normal activity** as soon as possible. There is no need for prolonged bed rest. School aged children can return to school as soon as they feel up to it. This may range from 2-7 days after the surgery.  
**A note will be given in the recovery room to excuse their days of absence.**  
No travel out of town for 2 weeks after surgery.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

- 1) **Ear Pain**- this can occur after tonsillectomy and is “referred” from the throat. It generally is not an ear infection. Chewing may help reduce some of this discomfort.
- 2) **Temperature**- it is not unusual for the temperature to reach 102° in the first few days after surgery. If it is greater than **103°**, please call us. Always encourage fluid intake during a fever.
- 3) **White patch over tonsil region**- this is the “scab” and is normal. It is not an infection. It will disappear about 10 days after surgery.
- 4) **Bad breath**-this may occur and is a normal part of the healing process. It will go away 7 to 10 days after surgery.

5) **Bleeding-** The chance for post-operative bleeding is small (1%- 2%).

If it occurs:

- **When:** On the 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> day after the operation.
- **How will you know it:** the child will **spit up or vomit** blood.
- **What do you do:** As this can be a medical emergency we prefer to evaluate all bleeding problems after a tonsillectomy. Please call the ENT office or the Rady Children's Hospital Operator as described below.

#### When should I call the office?

- If your child has not urinated in 12 hours
- Refusal to drink liquids for 12 hours
- A fever of 103 degrees or higher for more than 6 hours that does not go down with acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Severe pain that is not relieved with pain medication
- Bleeding from the nose, mouth, or vomiting of blood.
- **If there is a medical emergency, call 911.**

**8am-5pm Weekdays, call the Triage nurse at 858-309-7706**

**5pm-8am Weekdays and all day on weekends, call the Rady Children's Hospital Operator at 858-576-1700 and ask for the ENT after hours.**

#### Follow- up

You will be asked to complete a form regarding the post-operative recovery and send it back to us. In most cases children do not need to be seen routinely after a tonsillectomy. The doctor will advise you if he/she would like you to return for a follow-up visit. If you feel you would like to have your child seen, please call the office for an appointment.

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