

# After tonsillectomy or adenoidectomy: Home care information

## What should my child eat and drink after surgery?

Drinking plenty of fluids (water, juice) after surgery is very important!

- Eat soft foods such as custard, pudding, Jell-O, ice cream, yogurt, soft meat or chicken, cooked eggs, soft vegetables, mashed potatoes, peaches, pears, apricots, applesauce, cooked cereals, and strained soups.
- *We recommend avoiding all red-colored beverages or popsicles.*
- You may want to avoid citrus fruits and citrus juices, simply because they may be more painful to swallow. Avoid hot and highly seasoned foods, or foods that may have sharp edges such as toast, dry cereal, pizza crusts, chips, pretzels, popcorn.
- Slowly return to a normal diet 3 weeks after surgery.
- ***Drinking plenty of fluids is important.*** It is important to watch how much your child is drinking closely, and your doctor may provide you with a recommendation to prevent not drinking enough fluids. If you feel your child is not drinking enough fluids (dry diapers, decreased urine, dark urine) then contact the surgeon's clinic or present to the closest emergency room if after hours.
- It is OK to use a straw.
- Daily Fluid Recommendation: This will be dependent on your child's weight, and may be provided before your child goes home.

## What activity is acceptable after surgery?

It may take up to 2 weeks for your child to recover and be "back to normal" after surgery.

- Children are generally expected to stay out of school for one week, and avoid strenuous activity and exercise for 14 days.
- Upon return to school, tell your child's teachers about the surgery and what to report (consider giving them a copy of this information sheet).
- Avoid travel by airplane/train, camping, or other activities that may restrict the ability to get to a hospital in a timely manner.

## What should I do if my child is in pain?

Your child will have a very sore throat for 7-10 days after surgery. The sore throat may get worse before it gets better. Pain should be gone by 14 days after surgery. *It is important to know that although medications can help the pain, they might not resolve all of the pain your child has.*

- You may give your child acetaminophen and ibuprofen for pain control. Alternate the acetaminophen and ibuprofen every 3 hours, as needed for pain. If the above medications are

not controlling the pain adequately, please contact your surgeon's clinic. If narcotics are given, we recommend taking the first dose during the daytime and watching your child closely.

- Be sure your child is drinking plenty of fluids.
- Consider using a humidifier at night to moisten the air.

### **How do I care for my child's throat?**

Foul/bad breath is common after surgery.

- Teeth should be brushed 2 times per day.
- Avoid use of alcohol-based mouth rinses.
- Bad breath can be reduced by drinking plenty of fluids.
- White/yellow/green/gray colored patches where the tonsils used to be is **normal** and goes away after a couple weeks.

### **What if my child has a fever?**

A low-grade temperature, up to 101 degrees Fahrenheit (38.0 Celsius), is normal for the first several days after surgery.

- It is OK to use a rectal suppository of acetaminophen, if your child does not take the acetaminophen by mouth.
- If the fever is higher than 101 degrees Fahrenheit (38.0 Celsius), then call the surgeon's clinic for advice.

### **What do I do if there is bleeding?**

**If bleeding occurs, this requires your attention right away. Risk is highest during the first 24 hours, then again about 5-10 days after surgery. Risk of bleeding is present for 14 days.**

- It is important to know where your nearest hospital is.
- If child throws up blood, coughs up blood, or if blood is seen on bedsheets/clothing or from the nose or mouth, call 911.
- Stay calm to help your child stay calm.
- Have your child sit upright with the head leaning slightly forward.
- Let your surgeon's clinic know if your child is seen at different hospital than where they had surgery.

**If you need to call after clinic hours for a concern, call the UC Davis Medical Center hospital operator at 916-734-2011 and ask for the "physician on call for ENT."**

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