

Tonsil and/or Adenoid Surgery for children:

Information about the Operation

What are tonsils?

The tonsils are lumps of tissue located on either side of the back of the throat. They are part of the body's immune system and are designed to stop bacteria and viruses from entering the body through the mouth.

What are adenoids?

Adenoids are lumps of tissue located in the passage that connects the nose to the throat, but you can't see them when you look inside your child's mouth. Adenoids are designed to stop bacteria and viruses from entering the body through the nose.

Why does my child need this operation?

Surgery to remove the tonsils and/or adenoids is recommended when there have been repeated throat infections or when the tonsils are enlarged and are interfering with normal breathing, especially during sleep. A specialized ENT surgeon will perform the operation. After surgery, your child should have fewer ear and throat infections and have improved breathing during sleep.

Before the operation

Several hours before surgery, your child will need to stop eating and drinking. You will be given specific instructions for this. If your child is between 4 and 12 year of age, please schedule a Dr. Bear Pre-Admission Tour with your surgeon's office.

During the operation

Sleep medicine (general anaesthesia) will be given to your child by the anaesthetist. This will ensure your child stays asleep and does not feel any pain during the operation. The surgeon will remove the tonsils through your child's mouth. If your child is also having their adenoids removed, this will be done at the same time. The operation usually takes 45 – 60 minutes.

After the operation, your child will be taken to the Post Anaesthetic Care Unit (PACU) where they will be closely monitored by the nursing staff. Your child will have an intravenous line. As soon as your child is awake, a volunteer will escort **one** parent into the PACU to be with your child. Once your child is stable, you will accompany your child back to the Surgical Day Care Unit or to a room on the children's inpatient unit if your child is staying in hospital overnight.

Pain and Drinking

Your child will have a sore throat and possibly an earache when they wake up. Nurses will provide pain medication to your child. It is important that your child receives pain medication regularly, even when they do not ask for it. Medication makes your child feel better, and also makes drinking more comfortable. The most recent recommendation for the management of post operative pain is to give both Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) on a regular schedule. Occasionally, a low dose of Morphine is provided to children who do not experience enough relief from Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen. **Taking frequent sips of fluid is extremely important after the operation.** Drinking fluids keeps the throat moist which eases the pain, promotes healing and prevents dehydration. Your child will be offered sips of clear fluids, ice chips and Freezies. Your child will participate in a drinking challenge to earn stickers for every 30 mL (2 tablespoonfuls) of fluid they drink and eventually win a prize. **Please do not give your child products with red, brown or purple food colouring** (e.g. grape or cherry flavoured popsicles, Freezies, Jello, juice) as it may be mistaken as blood if your child vomits. **Please do not give your child a straw for drinking.**

When can my child go home?

Most children can go home once they are awake and drinking sips of liquid (usually 4 – 6 hours). Some very young children or those with sleeping disorders may be required stay in hospital overnight. In this case, discharge time is 7:30 am. Occasionally, children may vomit after the operation. This is common, and sometimes, the vomit may appear thick, and brownish in colour. Children who experience an upset stomach or vomiting after surgery will receive medicine to help settle the stomach.

How to prepare

- Purchase Dye-Free Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) and Ibuprofen (e.g. Advil®, Motrin®) to be given regularly for pain.
- Take your child grocery shopping for clear fluids such as apple juice, broth soup, Popsicles/Freezies, and soft foods such as noodles, eggs, yogurt, mashed potatoes, oatmeal and pudding. Avoid products with red, brown or purple food dye.
- Place a humidifier in your child's room. This will add moisture to the air and help to keep the throat moist.
- Plan for your child to relax at home for a minimum of 7 – 10 days after the operation.

