

Colorado Mountain Medical
Ear Nose and Throat
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CHILD TONSILLECTOMY POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS

Recovery: The recovery period for a tonsillectomy for a child is generally 1 to 2 weeks. Younger children will usually recover faster than teenagers. The day of surgery may not be too bad, but, by the 1st or 2nd post op day, the worst of the pain will usually set in. Your child may also note an increase in pain as the surgical sites are healing, around days 6 or 7.

Medications: You will be given a prescription for a liquid pain medicine (Lortab). I recommend beginning this pain medicine the day of surgery. Your child will generally be given their first dose in the recovery room of the surgery center. It is better to stay ahead of the pain, rather than fall behind and have to catch up. For the first few days after surgery, it is best to give the pain medicine regularly, every 4 to 6 hours. I do not recommend waking the child up to give pain medicine, but he or she may take it at night if they wake up and the pain is severe. Please call the office during office hours if a refill on the pain medicine is needed. If the pain medication upsets the stomach, your child will not take the medicine, or if your child vomits with the Lortab, you may switch to Tylenol or Ibuprofen. If the pain is not well controlled with the Lortab, I recommend alternating the Lortab with Ibuprofen every 4 hours

Activities: Your child should avoid any strenuous physical activity for a full 2 weeks. He or she should stay at home with an adult present at all times for at least a week following surgery.

Diet: I recommend liquids and soft foods for about 2 weeks after surgery. Your child will generally prefer cooler liquids and foods. Avoid acidic liquids such as orange or tomato juice, and avoid foods that scratch on the way down such as chips or toast. Ice cream and other milk products will thicken the saliva, so yogurt and sherbets are better (if your child loves milk products, give it freely but wash it down with some water. It is very important that your child remains well hydrated, and you should insist that he or she drink plenty of fluids. If you cannot keep fluids down, call the office to be admitted to the hospital for intravenous fluids.

Follow Up: We should see your child about 1 week after surgery.

Unusual Occurrences: It is common to experience ear pain in addition to a sore throat. This is called "referred pain" and should be controllable with the pain medicine. It is also fairly common to have a low grade fever (99-101) in the week following surgery. If the fever is > 102, call the office immediately.

Bleeding from the area of the tonsils is my main concern post operatively. It is rare, but it occurs in about 2% of patients, and it can be severe. Bleeding is most common within the first 48 hour after surgery or in 7 to 9 days when the scabs fall off. It is normal for there to be small amounts of old blood in the mucous or saliva. When true bleeding occurs your child will either throw up a large amount of old blood (this looks like either dark red blood or coffee grounds) or you will see bright red blood dripping from the nose or mouth. If this occurs, immediately place ice or a popsicle in the mouth as the cold may constrict the blood vessel and stop the bleeding. If the bleeding persists for longer than 5 minutes, call my office immediately.