



POST-OP TONSILLECTOMY INSTRUCTIONS

FLUIDS: The most important thing to remember after surgery is to stay hydrated. It is uncomfortable to swallow after having the tonsils removed, but if you get behind on fluids it will become more uncomfortable. Remember – you can get by without eating much during the week after surgery, but if you don't drink for just a couple days you will end up in the hospital needing intravenous fluids. **DRINK – DRINK – DRINK!**

DIET: There is only one real restriction after surgery – **NO HARD OR SCRATCHY FOOD** for two weeks! Avoid chips, crackers, hard pizza crust, hard crusted breads, etc. These items can scratch the scabs off the back of your throat and cause you to start bleeding before you are healed and necessitate a trip back to surgery. Otherwise may eat whatever you can tolerate as long as it is soft.

BLEEDING: As discussed at your initial appointment, tonsillectomy has a risk of bleeding. If this happens, rinse the mouth with an ice water rinse/gargle for 5-10 minutes. If the bleeding does not stop then you should call our office immediately to reach our nurse on call or go to the nearest emergency room.

MEDICATIONS: The typical medications given after surgery are –

- **Pain medicine** – Typically Lortab Elixir (liquid hydrocodone/acetaminophen) or Percocet tablets (oxycodone/acetaminophen) are prescribed. These do not taste good and can burn a little when swallowed, however these are the only good pain relievers available. The medicine will usually be liquid, but if it is given in pill format you may crush the pills into powder and take it with a little liquid or put in something such as applesauce to make it easier to swallow. The narcotic pain medicine can be taken every 4- 6 hours. Do not exceed the maximum dose prescribed as this could cause liver damage. You may take less than the recommended dose, but not more. You should not take any additional products with acetaminophen, such as Tylenol with the pain medication, but you can take Ibuprofen products in addition to the narcotics. I often recommend alternating the narcotic with ibuprofen every three hours so you are getting something for pain every three hours, but only repeating each medicine at 6 hour intervals. Narcotics often make people a little nauseated, so trying to take it with food can be helpful.
- **Tetracaine Sucker:** You will be given a prescription for an optional medication in the form of a sucker or “lollipop.” This is only available at the Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy in Rexburg, located on the corner of 2nd West and Main Street. It is not covered by insurance and is about \$14. You may suck on this for 20-40 seconds and it will numb the throat to relieve the pain. It is similar to Chloroseptic or Cepacol sprays that are over-the-counter.
- **Fire Extinguisher:** We offer a lidocaine solution for patients older than 10 that can be sprayed on the back of the throat every 2-3 hours as needed. It is available in our office for \$20, and can be refilled for \$15.

EAR PAIN: Many patients will experience ear pain around the fourth or fifth day. It is not an ear infection, but actually due to a nerve that is shared by the throat and the ear. This is called “referred pain” and should be treated with the pain medications you have been given. Use a warm—not hot—heating pad or rice pack to decrease discomfort from this.

FOLLOW-UP: Each patient who undergoes surgery should be seen in our office within 10-14 days after surgery. This appointment should be scheduled at the time you scheduled your surgery, but if this was overlooked, please call the office to schedule this visit.

ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL/WORK: Typically people need 7-10 days to recover from a tonsillectomy. You should limit straining, lifting, and bending over for the first week as this will increase the risk of bleeding. People with a sedentary job not requiring a lot of strain may return sooner, but you must not go to school or work if you are still taking the narcotic pain medications. If you are doing well enough to take Ibuprofen or acetaminophen to control the pain you may go back to school/work. If you go back to school/work, you can still use the narcotics at night. When you return for your follow up visit we can write you a release from school/work to cover the days you missed.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS: Should you have any concerns, questions, or problems during your post-operative recovery period, please do not hesitate to contact the office at [208-656-9646](tel:208-656-9646) during business hours, or [208-419-3254](tel:208-419-3254) after hours. If unable to reach our nurse on call, please go to Madison Memorial Hospital ER and they will page your doctor.

SINCERELY – DR.'S MCMASTER AND PETERSON