

## Day Surgery Unit

# Tonsillectomy advice leaflet

## Adult pre-operative/post operative Day Surgery patients

### What are tonsils?

Tonsils are lumps of tissue at the back of the throat that help to filter and protect the body from infection. The size of the tonsils varies. Tonsillitis occurs when the tonsils themselves become infected. They become red and swollen and this can make eating and swallowing difficult and painful.

### Why remove them?

Removing the tonsils is at the discretion of the individual surgeon. Recurrent tonsillitis causes enlargement of the tonsils, difficulty with eating and perhaps breathing, and a loss of work time. This often leads to the recommendation that the tonsils should be removed.

### Before the operation

You will be admitted the morning of the operation. Please phone if you are unwell the day before surgery. On the day of surgery a general and an ENT examination will be done. If you have a temperature, or if there is any evidence of an infection or recent infection, the operation will almost certainly be postponed. This is because the risk of postoperative bleeding is increased when infection is present. Please keep simple pain killers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen for you to use when you return home.

As you may not be the first patient to have surgery on the day you may have to wait, so please bring something with you to read.

### After the operation

Your throat will be sore after surgery. You will have had some analgesia (pain killers) during the operation and you will continue to have them when you are back on the ward. You may want to sleep or read for the next few hours.

Occasionally, you may vomit after the operation. This is usually caused because of old blood (dark brown in colour) which has been swallowed during or after the surgery. Nurses will also look for any evidence of fresh bleeding (bright red).

Post operative bleeding is unusual but it can occur. The nurse will also observe you and measure your heart rate frequently.

You will not be able to eat or drink until two hours after your surgery. You can then have sips of water first, followed by toast/sandwich. It's best to avoid very hot drinks, or drinks that are red/brown and could look like blood.

## Going home

You will stay a minimum of six hours on the ward. We are expecting you to go home after the operation. Eat your normal food and drink after the operation. Crunchier crispy food such as toast and cornflakes are desirable. However, avoiding acidic drinks such as orange juice may make recovery more comfortable.

Avoid very hot (steaming) food or drinks and also hot showers or baths for at least 48 hours.

The anaesthetic may make you feel more tired than usual for a day or two. It is also important to get lots of rest.

It is very important to take regular pain killers during the first seven days (even if you don't think you need them). Pain after tonsillectomy often peaks at days three to six. Pain is sometimes felt in the ear, but this is rare. Take more pain killers if your pain is troublesome.

## If you notice

- Increasing pain even with your regular medication.
- Bleeding such as spitting out fresh blood more than one tablespoon or blood clots, then contact the Day Surgery ward immediately on **01223 256330/216545**. The ward will be open for the first 24 hours after your surgery.
- After 24 hours contact M5/ the on-call on **01223 274283** through the switchboard.

If major bleeding occurs please go immediately to the Accident and Emergency unit at Addenbrooke's.

You should take at least two weeks off work, more if necessary. You should stay at home, away from smoky atmospheres and people with coughs, colds or any other infections. By the end of the second week you should have returned to your normal activities.

## Contacts/further information

- Addenbrooke's Day Surgery Unit: 01223 256330/216545
- Your Consultant's Registrar: 01223 245151
- Your General Practitioner (GP)



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

### Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or

[patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)



### Document history

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