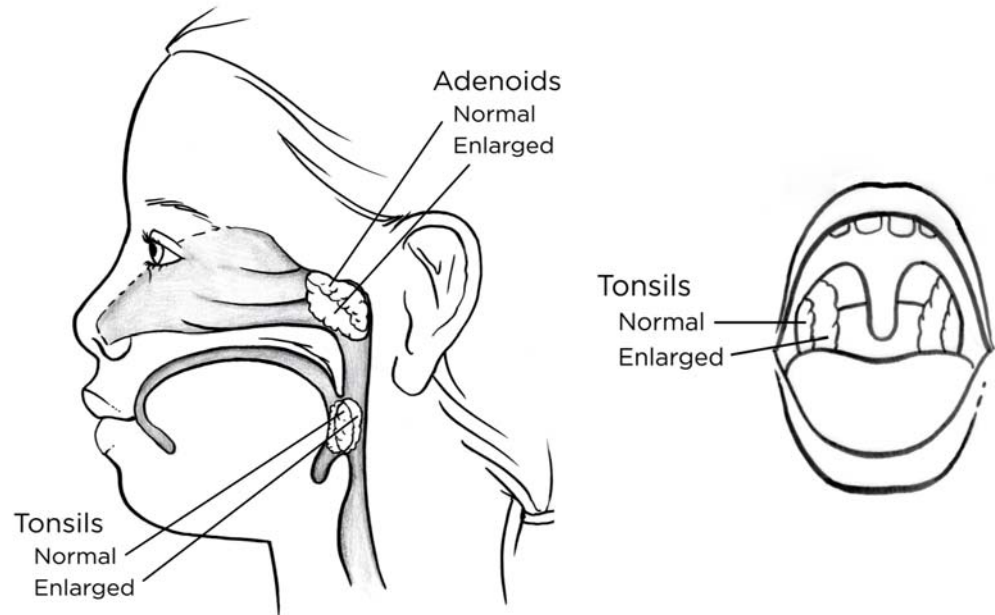


Tonsil and Adenoid Surgery

What are tonsils and adenoids?

Tonsils are tissue in the back of the throat and adenoids are higher up, in the back of the nose. While tonsils and adenoids are part of the immune system, removing tonsils (tonsillectomy) and adenoids (adenoidectomy) does not affect the body's ability to fight infections.



Why are tonsils and adenoids removed?

- For snoring, nasal obstruction or sleep apnea.
- For frequent tonsil infections.
- Adenoids are sometimes removed to reduce sinus and ear infections.

What are the risks of having tonsils and adenoids removed?

- Bleeding right after surgery, or delayed bleeding up to 14 days after surgery. Severe bleeding is rare, but can require surgery or a blood transfusion.
- A permanent voice change is possible, but rare. There is a surgery to correct this.
- Some children may continue to snore or have sleep issues after having their tonsils removed.

How long does it take to recover from surgery?

Each child is different. Recovery time for an adenoidectomy usually takes 2 to 5 days. Recovery time for a tonsillectomy usually takes 7 to 14 days.

To Learn More

- Otolaryngology
206-987-2105
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

How do I care for my child at home?

Pain and Comfort

- The pain may be severe and can be worse at night. It is normal for pain to change from day to day.
- Take pain medicines as directed by your healthcare provider. Check with your child's healthcare provider first before giving any type of medicine to your child.
- To keep your family safe, store medicines inside a locked cabinet or location where others cannot easily get to them. Once your child has recovered from surgery, dispose of all unused prescription medicines. Taking leftover pain or other medicines on purpose or by accident, can be very dangerous. For more information about safe disposal of unused medications including pain medications, read our handout "How to Get Rid of Unused Prescription Medicines" at seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE784.pdf or visit takebackyourmeds.org to find a take back place near you."
- Ear pain is very common and normal. It is not a sign of an ear infection. We do not recommend antibiotics for ear pain.
- An ice pack placed over the neck is soothing to some children.
- Effective pain control will make your child more comfortable, increase activity and strength, and promote healing.

Adenoidectomy

- Your child may have pain for 2 to 5 days after surgery.

Tonsillectomy

- Your child may have pain 7 to 14 days after surgery.
- Pain may increase on days 5 to 7 after surgery. This is when the scabs in the throat begin to fall off.

Eating and Drinking

- Your child may have nausea or vomiting after surgery which should go away by the next day. Give only sips of clear liquids until the vomiting stops.
- Liquids are very important! Drinking can reduce pain and help your child heal. Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids including popsicles, Gatorade, juice, milkshakes, Jell-O, smoothies or ice cream. Milk is fine if it is normally tolerated by your child.
- It is safe to drink with a straw.
- If your child refuses to drink because of throat pain, make sure they have taken their pain medicine. Then, encourage sips of fluids every 5 minutes for 1 to 2 hours, if needed.
- Your child may eat regular food the evening of their surgery. Your child may be more comfortable starting to eat soft foods like soups, pasta, applesauce, yogurt, or pudding.

How do I care for my child at home?

Activity

- Encourage quiet play for the first few days after surgery.

Adenoidectomy

- Plan for your child to be out of school or daycare for 1 to 3 days.
- No physical exercise or vigorous activity for 7 days.

Tonsillectomy

- Plan for your child to be out of school or daycare for at least 1 week.
- No gym class, sports or vigorous activities for 2 weeks.
- No travel for 2 weeks after surgery.

Bad breath

Bad breath is a normal part of the healing process, and will go away in 7 to 10 days after surgery. After a tonsillectomy, the throat will have gray or white patches. These patches are not a sign of infection.

Congestion and drainage

After an adenoidectomy, it is common to have increased nasal congestion and drainage. This will usually go away in 7 to 10 days.

Fever

A fever up to 102 degrees for several days after surgery is common. We do not recommend antibiotics for fevers. **Your child should be seen by their pediatrician if there are other concerning symptoms, including bad cough and working harder to breathe.**

Voice changes

Your child's voice may sound different (**hypernasal**) for several weeks after surgery.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the doctor if your child has:

- Not urinated in 12 hours
- Refused to drink liquids for 12 hours
- A fever of 102 degrees or higher for more than 6 hours that does not go down with acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Severe pain that is not relieved with pain medicine
- Vomiting more than once

Take your child to the Emergency Department if:

They have bleeding from the mouth or nose, or for vomiting of blood. If there is a lot of blood, call 911. Bleeding can occur up to 2 weeks after surgery.

Who do I call if I have questions?

For questions, call the Otolaryngology department at 206-987-2105 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For questions after hours, weekends or holidays, call 206-987-2000, and ask the operator to page the on-call Otolaryngology provider.