

Summary

1. Any bleeding - return to the Emergency Department at Royal Cornwall Hospital.
2. Any infection - see your GP.
3. Keep your child off school for two weeks.
4. Give your child the prescribed pain relief medicines.
5. Eat a normal diet.

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Caring for your child following a tonsillectomy



What is a tonsillectomy?

This is an operation to remove the tonsils from the back of the throat. The operation is performed under general anaesthetic and takes about 30 minutes. The adenoids may also be removed (adenoidectomy).

The operation leaves two raw patches which need to heal. Your child may need stitches in the back of their throat. These will dissolve so do not need removing.

Will my child have any pain or discomfort?

Most children find their throat is painful following the operation. Swallowing is uncomfortable, but it is very important that your child eats as normal a diet as possible. This helps to:

- scrape away dead tissue from the operation site, which reduces the risk of bleeding and infection
- stop the muscles at the back of the throat going into spasm, by using them. Any muscle spasm will make the pain worse.

If your child's adenoids are removed, it will leave a raw patch at the back of the nose, but it is not as painful as the tonsil operation.

When can I take my child home?

Your child will usually be able to go home later that day. They must remain on the ward for a minimum of six hours following surgery. Before going home, your child must be eating and drinking, and be up and about. If your child's operation is in the afternoon, they may need to stay overnight in hospital.

What happens afterwards?

After about 12 hours a white or yellow membrane (thin skin) appears where the tonsils were. This is normal and is not a sign of infection. It lasts for 12-14 days.

How do I help ease my child's pain?

Tonsil pain usually lasts about one week, with the pain becoming worse after 3-4 days. The pain will improve by the end of the first week. It is important that you give your child the prescribed painkillers every six hours for the first week.

You may also need to give painkillers during the night for a few days. This will help to control your child's pain well.

How long will my child need off school?

It will take two weeks for your child to recover from the operation. Your child should remain off school for two weeks and during this time should not mix with people with coughs and colds.

What should I look out for?

Infection

If your child develops a high temperature and has very bad breath it may be a sign of infection. Your child may need antibiotics, which your GP can prescribe.

Bleeding

About 3 out of 100 people having their tonsils out return to hospital because of bleeding. A few of these people need another operation to stop the bleeding. Small spots or flecks of blood are normal, but if there is any more than this you must bring your child back to the Emergency Department at Royal Cornwall Hospital at once. Contact Harlyn ward first to alert the medical staff.

Taste disturbance

Some patients may notice an altered sense of taste that occasionally can be severe and may last a long time. At present, there is nothing you can do about this.

Contact us

Harlyn ward 01872 253909

Dosage instructions

Paracetamol	time
Ibuprofen	time
Codeine	time