

Greenville ENT Post-op Instructions

What to Expect at Home



Tonsillectomy (Adult)

Your Recovery

A tonsillectomy is surgery to remove the tonsils. Sometimes the adenoids are removed during the same surgery. The tonsils and adenoids are in the throat. Your doctor did the surgery through your mouth.

Most adults have a lot of throat pain for 1 to 2 weeks or longer. The pain may get worse before it gets better. The pain in your throat can also make your ears hurt. You may have good days and bad days. Most people find that they have the most pain in the first 8 days. You probably will feel tired for 1 to 2 weeks. You may have bad breath for up to 2 weeks.

You may be able to go back to work or your usual routine in 1 to 2 weeks.

There will be a white coating in your throat where the tonsils were. The coating is like a scab. There is no need to inspect it. It usually starts to come off in 5 to 10 days. It is usually gone in 10 to 16 days. You may see some blood in your spit as the coating comes off.

After surgery, you may snore or breathe through your mouth at night. This usually gets better 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. Mouth breathing can make your mouth and throat dry or sore. Place a humidifier by your bed when you sleep. This may make it easier for you to breathe. Follow the directions for cleaning the machine.

At first, your voice may sound different. Your voice should get back to normal in 2 to 6 weeks.

It's common for people to lose weight after this surgery. That's because it can hurt to swallow food at first. As long as you drink plenty of liquids, this is okay. You will probably gain the weight back when you can eat normally again.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to get better as quickly as possible.

Medicine

	You will most likely be prescribed Hycet liquid (or another narcotic pain medicine).
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	<p>If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach. you should have a nausea medicine (such as Zofran) to take as prescribed.</p> <p>You will most likely be prescribed a steroid (dexamethasone) to take once, three days after surgery. (Or according to how your doctor prescribes it.)</p> <p>You may have a custom tetracaine (numbing) lollipop prescribed. They are available at compounding pharmacies.</p>
	You may or may not be prescribed an antibiotic.
	<p>You should be able to restart any regular medication.</p> <p>Avoid blood thinners and aspirin for 2 weeks.</p>
	<p>If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Take your pain medicine after meals. · Take your nausea medicine.

Activity

	Rest when you feel tired. Getting enough sleep will help you recover.
	Try to walk each day. Start by walking a little more than you did the day before. Bit by bit, increase the amount you walk. Walking boosts blood flow and helps prevent pneumonia and constipation.
	Avoid strenuous activities, such as bicycle riding, jogging, weight lifting, or aerobic exercise for 2 weeks or until your doctor says it is okay.
	For 2 weeks, avoid lifting anything that would make you strain. This may include a child, heavy grocery bags and milk containers, a heavy briefcase or backpack, cat litter or dog food bags, or a vacuum cleaner.
	Avoid dirt, dust, and heat for 2 weeks after surgery. These things can irritate your throat.

	For about 1 week, try to avoid crowds or people who you know have a cold or the flu. This can help prevent you from getting an infection.
	You may bathe as usual.
	You will probably need to take 1 to 2 weeks off from work. It depends on the type of work you do and how you feel.

Diet

	Drink plenty of fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated.
	If it is painful to swallow, start out with Popsicles, ice cream, or cold or room-temperature drinks. You may find it is more comfortable to avoid hot drinks, soda pop, orange or tomato juice, and other acidic foods that can sting the throat.
	For 2 weeks, avoid eating hard or scratchy foods like chips, pizza crust, or hard taco shells.
	You may notice that your bowel movements are not regular right after surgery. This is common. Try to avoid constipation and straining with bowel movements. You may want to take a fiber supplement every day. If you have not had a bowel movement after a couple of days, you may take a mild laxative (like Miralax).

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care.

For example, call if:

	You pass out (lose consciousness).
	You have severe trouble breathing.
	You have a lot of bleeding.

Call your doctor or seek medical care if:

	Fever over 101F.
	You are bleeding.
	You are too sick to your stomach to drink any fluids.
	You cannot keep down fluids.