

## Tonsillectomy Post-operative Instructions

**Unfortunately, it is expected that SIGNIFICANT throat pain will occur for up to two weeks after tonsils are removed.** Regardless of the surgical method used, or what you have heard from other people who have had it done, EXPECT throat pain for two weeks. For the first several days after the procedure the pain tends to be less severe, and then becomes worse 3-5 days after surgery. **It is NORMAL to run a low grade fever (commonly up to 101.5) and to have ear pain. This ear pain is referred pain from the tonsils/throat and IS NOT an ear infection. It is also normal to have VERY bad breath.**

It is impossible to make this pain completely go away. The recommended pain medication will make it better, but nothing will take the pain fully away besides time. Again, it is typically a full **TWO WEEKS** of pain. FYI, most sprays for sore throat (i.e. Chloraseptic) have alcohol in them and will burn.

The most important strategy during this period is to stay hydrated. You will know that you/your child are drinking enough if you/your child are producing very pale urine at least 2-3 times a day. It is critical that fluids be forced if necessary to prevent dehydration, which is the most common complication after tonsillectomy. It is sometimes necessary to use a medicine dropper to force small amount of fluids with children. If dehydration occurs, it will lead to nausea, inability to take pain medication and worsening dehydration. Dehydration also increases the risk of bleeding. If you/your child become dehydrated and it is impossible to take fluids you should go to the emergency room for IV fluids and IV pain medication. **If your pain is not controlled with the prescription pain medication, and you/your child is unable to tolerate liquids to stay hydrated, there is nothing besides IV fluids and IV pain medication that can be prescribed and you should go to the Emergency Room.**

**It is critical to drink fluids, and to drink more than just water (water toxicity can occur with large amounts of water by itself).** You can drink fruit juice (i.e. apple) or sports drinks (i.e. Gatorade) to avoid water toxicity. It is not important to force food, but when eating solids, it is important to pick soft foods without sharp edges. Pretzels, Doritos, toast, etc. are examples of foods with sharp edges. These foods can lead to bleeding. Apple sauce and eggs are examples of soft foods.

It is also common to have a little bit of blood in the saliva/ mucus for the first 24 hours after surgery. It is also possible to have a small amount of bleeding 7-10 days after surgery when the scab falls off in the back of the throat. **IF THERE IS MORE THAN JUST MOMENTARY BLOOD, you should begin GENTLY gargling with a solution of ½ Cold Water and ½ Hydrogen peroxide. DO NOT SWALLOW THE MIXTURE.** Once it runs clear, stop gargling. If the bleeding persists after gargling call the office/answering service at 410-821-5151.

Although the post-tonsillectomy recovery period can be rough, once you turn the corner it will be worth it!