

### **WHAT IS A TONSILLECTOMY?**

A tonsillectomy is the surgical removal of the tonsils. These are small rounded masses of tissue found in the throat.

### **WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE SURGERY?**

Certain diagnostic tests may be organised prior to your surgery such as blood tests if indicated. Generally speaking, patients are admitted to the hospital on the day of surgery.

**You are advised to cease smoking one week prior to surgery.**

You will need to FAST (have nothing to eat or drink) at either 6am or 12 midnight.

### **HOW LONG WILL I BE IN HOSPITAL?**

Usually patients having a tonsillectomy only have to stay overnight in hospital. You will be discharged home between approximately 10.00 – 11.00 am the following day.

### **WHAT SORT OF ANAESTHETIC WILL I HAVE?**

You will be given a general anaesthetic to put you to sleep.

Any questions you have about your anaesthetic will be answered prior to the operation by the anaesthetist.

### **WHAT HAPPENS TO ME AFTER SURGERY?**

- You will feel drowsy after the operation and may require some oxygen until fully awake.
- You may experience nausea and vomiting. The nursing staff will give you medication to control this.
- You may eat and drink once you are fully awake and alert which is usually about four hours following your return to the ward. You will be given ice initially to suck.
- In the mean time you will have an intravenous drip in your arm which will ensure you do not become dehydrated.
- You will be encouraged to deep breathe and perform gentle leg exercises to avoid complications such as chest infection and clots in the legs.

- You may feel some soreness as the anaesthetic wears off and may need pain relieving medication. If you have any discomfort be sure to ask the nursing and medical staff for some pain relieving medication.
- The bed head will be semi-upright and will remain this way overnight to help your breathing.
- Please notify the nursing staff if you feel that you are swallowing blood.

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I GO HOME?**

- The hospital requests that upon discharge you are escorted home by a family member or friend. It is not advisable for you to drive yourself, or to take public transport home. It is recommended that you have someone care for you up to 2 days whilst at home or until you are feeling better.
- It is common that your throat will be sore for the first 7 days but can last up to 14 days. Expect the sore throat to be worst around 4 days after your operation.
- Ear pain or earache is due to referred pain from the throat and does not necessarily mean you have an ear infection. However, if this is severe or prolonged, it should be reviewed by a doctor.
- You may notice white crusty patches on the tonsillar bed as your throat heals, these are not a sign of infection. The white patches can be expected to come off and may cause a little bleeding. The white patches can also be accompanied by offensive breath. Gargling a mouth wash such as Diflam or Thymol will improve your breath and have an analgesic effect.
- Eat as normal a diet as possible post-operatively. In general choose things that are easy to swallow and avoid hot or spicy foods. Extra fluid intake is encouraged and will result in a quicker recovery.

### **Activity Limitations**

- On discharge it is important to rest in bed for 2-3 days and stay indoors for the next 3-4 days doing gentle activity. Normal activities may be resumed after 10-14 days.
- Avoid hot showers & saunas for several days as this can increase the risk of bleeding.
- Antibiotics are usually unnecessary but if prescribed you will need to complete the full course.

### **Pain relief:**

Take Panadol/Panadeine as directed after discharge for minor pain. You will be provided with Tramadol or a prescription for Tramadol for stronger pain.

**DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN / DISPRIN as these may cause bleeding.**

### **Return to work:**

Usually one week or more is required off work, depending on how quickly you recover. If you require a medical certificate, please ensure you obtain one prior to your discharge. Children often recover more quickly but may need a full two weeks off school.

### **Follow - up:**

A follow -up appointment for review by the doctor will be made three weeks after surgery. If your operation was booked from the Outpatient Clinic, then a review will be made at discharge in the ward.

### **WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL DOCTOR OR THE DEPARTMENT OF E.N.T.**

Contact or go and see your local doctor if you have:

- Persistent nausea and /or vomiting
- Persistent bleeding
- Fever
- Pain not controlled by adequate analgesia

It usually takes the tonsil bed up to 21 days to heal, and during this time there is a slight risk of bleeding.

A small spot of bleeding should not cause concern, but if there is persistent bleeding you must treat this as potentially serious and seek prompt medical attention.

**In the case of an emergency you may contact the Emergency Department at Prince Court Medical Centre on Ph: 2160 0000.**

Please do not hesitate to contact the nursing staff in the Ward (24 hours a day) if you have any questions or concerns. Ph: 2160 0000.

**PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW TO WRITE DOWN ANY QUESTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK WHEN YOU ARE ADMITTED.**

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**WHAT TO BRING INTO HOSPITAL**

- Make sure to remember to bring in all your x-rays and any medications you may normally take each day.
- Please ensure that all jewellery and make-up or nail polish if applicable is removed prior to your admission
- Please bring a change of clothes, pyjamas, slippers, dressing gown and all personal toiletries you will require whilst in hospital
- Please let nursing staff know if you have any special needs which may affect your care. eg. religious or cultural customs, non-English speaking.

**VISITING HOURS**

Visitors are welcome between the hours of **10 am and 8pm**. It is requested that all other times are respected as rest periods for the patient.

**PHONE ENQUIRES**

It would be appreciated if you could also restrict all patient enquiries to the nominated times below and nominate one family member to make the calls due to the busy nature of the ward. **Thank-you.**  
(10am - 12md), ( 2pm - 4pm), ( 6pm – 8pm)



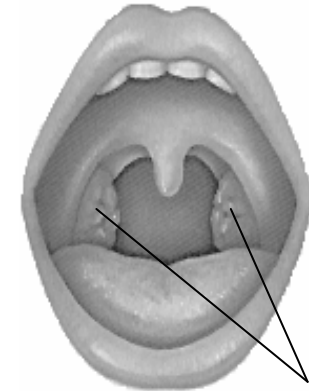
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Tonsils

**A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS HAVING A TONSILLECTOMY**

**This pamphlet is a guide and is no substitute for a full and open discussion of the risks and benefits of the proposed procedure, these should be discussed with your doctor. The specific details of your care may vary from the matters discussed in this guide.**

**PLEASE BRING THIS PAMPHLET WITH YOU ON YOUR ADMISSION TO THE HOSPITAL**