

ADULT TONSILLECTOMY POST OP INSTRUCTIONS

Leaving the hospital

1. Any medication you are prescribed, should be taken as directed on the bottle. You will usually be given a prescription for pain killers and antibiotics.

Eating and Drinking

It is very important to maintain adequate hydration after operation. Drink lots of water (more than 2 litres per day for adults). You may find the citric acid in fruit juices irritating, milk based products are most soothing. Gatorade / other electrolyte drinks may also help.

There are no dietary restrictions after surgery. Alkaline and cool foods (i.e. ice cream) may be most comfortable for the first 24 hours. After this period you should return as soon as possible to a normal diet. Take care in the first 2 weeks as hot, spicy and acid based foods will hurt. If you are considering juices try diluting them 1 part to 4 parts water to reduce the acidity. The sooner you return to a normal diet, the less chance there is for infection to develop and therefore the less risk for bleeding.

Gargling

On your way home, pick up some hydrogen peroxide based mouth gargling available over the counter from the chemist (eg. colgate palmolive sells a suitable version). 10 mLs gargled every 8 to 12 hours for the first 14 days is recommended for adults. For children < 12 years old this is not recommended.

Pain Management

- Paracetamol (panadol) 500mg tablets 2 tablets four times a day.
- Oxycodone tablets when required and as prescribed.
- Diffiam or Cepacaine gargles 3 to 4 times a day.
- If these measures are not controlling your pain then fill the tramadol prescription and use that as well as the medications above.

Nausea and Vomiting

It is not uncommon to experience nausea / vomiting after a tonsillectomy. It is not usually severe or long lasting. If you have persistent nausea and vomiting, use the ondansetron prescription (these are small wafers that you dissolve under your tongue). If after 24 hours of taking the ondansetron you are unable to keep fluids down you should contact your anaesthetist.

Please note:

1. THROAT PAIN is normal for 21 days after the surgery. Days 1 to 3 are tolerable, but expect the pain to worsen between days 4 to 9. The pain should gradually decrease day by day until you can comfortably eat around day 14.
2. EAR PAIN is normal after this surgery. The pain is usually a deep ache and is referred pain. The same nerve that supplies the throat supplies the ear (therefore throat inflammation translates into ear pain.)
3. BLEEDING from either the nose or throat may occur in a small percentage of patients.

This is usually if oral intake has been poor and infection is developing. If minor bleeding occurs increase the peroxide gargling to 4 times a day. Also try and eat / swallow more frequently to clear the infected slough over the tonsil beds. If heavy bleeding occurs (ie. more than half a cup full), and does not stop, please contact your doctor IMMEDIATELY

4. DO NOT perform any heavy lifting (more than 15 kilograms) or vigorous physical activity (including sport) for three weeks after surgery.

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