



University
Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust

the alex

Tonsillectomy



Information for parents and carers

What are tonsils?

Tonsils are 2 areas of tissue either side of the throat that help to fight germs and act as a barrier against infection.

As a child's immune system develops and gets stronger, the tonsils become less important and usually shrink. In most people, the body is able to fight infection without the tonsils.

Rest and infection

Your child needs rest and quiet for the next two days following their operation. You may find that he/she is more sleepy and/or irritable than normal.

It is important that your child is kept away from people who may have a cold or flu. This makes it necessary for them to stay off school for two weeks and avoid crowded areas such as swimming pools, cinemas and supermarkets. You should also avoid smoky environments.

Eating and drinking

Encourage your child to eat and drink as normally as possible. The more your child chews and swallows the easier eating will become, it may help if cool drinks are offered hourly.

To promote healing and keep the throat free of food particles, older children can gargle with water half an hour after meals.

Normal consistency food (i.e not just soft foods and ice-cream) will keep the throat clean and therefore reduce the risk of infection.

If children are old enough, chewing gum can reduce muscular spasm, which can cause earache.

If your child is not eating and drinking please phone the ward.

Pain relief

Your child will have some pain; this may be similar to a severe sore throat.

It is often at its worst between the fourth and eighth day after the operation, because this is when a membrane loosens off the tonsil beds. Earache is common as the nerve supply to the tonsils and the ears are connected.

To help relieve this pain, paracetamol and ibuprofen may be given according to the instructions given on leaving the ward.

You will need to give this regularly for 7 to 10 days.

If given about 30 minutes before a meal it may help your child eat more easily.

You will also be given morphine to take home to give as required. Follow bottle instructions for dosage and timing. Don't exceed the maximum dose in 24 hours.

Bleeding and safety

It is advisable to check on your child during the night.

There may be a few specks of fresh blood if your child coughs or sneezes very hard in the next 24 to 48 hours. This is normal.

If there is any bleeding or you are worried please contact the hospital immediately on 01273 696955 and ask to speak to the Paediatric Bleep Holder for advice.

If your child has a temperature and/or increased lethargy during the first 7 days, please phone Level 7 on the above telephone number.

It is advisable to sleep in the same room as your child so that you will be aware of any distress for the first night.

In an emergency

For example, if your child vomits mostly bright red fresh blood call an ambulance. Please take your GP letter with you to the hospital.

Contact details for non-urgent questions

Level 7 Day Case Unit

01273 696955 Ext. 2381

Monday to Friday 7:30am to 7:30pm

Out of hours

Level 8

01273 696955 Ext. 2552

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**This leaflet is intended for patients
receiving care in Brighton & Hove
or Haywards Heath.**

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