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Tonsillectomy with or without Adenoidectomy

Post-Operative Instructions

PAIN

Severe throat pain is common and expected after tonsil surgery. Adenoid removal also causes some pain, but it is much less severe. The pain is severe in adults for about two weeks and for about one week in young kids. The pain often worsens a few days after surgery. Ear pain is common following tonsillectomy and/or adenoidectomy and usually does not mean there is an ear infection. Tongue pain and headache are also common.

PAIN CONTROL

Pain meds take the edge off, but do not eliminate pain. Take pain medication sooner rather than later. Do not hesitate to call if a refill is needed. Common side effects of prescription pain medication are nausea and constipation. It is important to take them with food. If you become constipated, try Miralax and Colace. We do not recommend setting alarms to wake you or your child up to take meds - sleep is at a premium during recovery!

TONSILLECTOMY SITE

A white fluffy appearance at the back of the throat represents normal healing after tonsillectomy. Mouth odor is expected for 2 weeks after surgery for tonsillectomy patients. There may be a temporary change in voice quality.

FEVER

Mild temperature elevation is normal within the first 24 hours. Use Tylenol or a sponge bath to help. Let us know if the temperature is over 101.5.

HYDRATION

Drink plenty of liquids. By keeping the throat moist, liquids will decrease discomfort after surgery. The best choice of liquids contain electrolytes. Most everyone can tolerate a week without eating, but not a week without drinking. Stay hydrated!

DIET

Soft, cold, non-acidic diet for a full 7 days after tonsillectomy. This includes foods such as Jell-O, soft eggs, mashed potatoes, pudding, and soft cereals such as oatmeal. Please avoid dry, hard or scratchy foods like crackers, dry cereals, potato chips, and pretzels. Also avoid spicy foods, foods that are hot in temperature, and citrus. Popsicles have the added bonus of helping numb the throat. Anything that is NOT soft and cold, with the exception of popsicles, can cause bleeding!

THINGS TO AVOID

- Coughing, throat clearing, smoking, and nose blowing.
- Straws for smoothies and milkshakes. They are ok to use with thin liquids.
- Go ahead and brush your teeth, but for tonsillectomy, no gargling or strong mouthwashes.
- NO strenuous activity or lifting more than 10 pounds for a full 10 days after surgery. Slowly increase your activity level after 10 days or when you feel up to it.

For any questions, contact us by phone, text or email.