



Santa Barbara ENT

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**OUTPATIENT SURGERY  
INSTRUCTIONS AFTER  
TONSILLECTOMY and ADENOIDECTOMY  
PEDIATRIC**

The tonsils and adenoid region will heal over a three week period. Most healing is accomplished within the first 7 days.

**PAIN/DISCOMFORT**

It is normal to have a shaggy gray or tan coating at the back of the mouth and bad breath during this time. The child may experience moderate discomfort or pain in the first 3-5 days. Generally the pain is worse at night. This should be controlled with the medication prescribed (Lortab elixir or Roxicet) or with ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin). Many patients alternate these two medications. Once the discomfort or pain improves, then you may find that plain Tylenol or ibuprofen is sufficient during the day. Your child should not take plain Tylenol within four hours of Lortab or Roxicet as these narcotic prescription drugs already contain Tylenol.

An ice pack or frozen peas in a bag alongside the neck may also help to relieve pain.

Beginning on postoperative days 4-7, your child may experience ear pain. Generally, this is referred pain from the throat and will resolve as the tonsillar/throat area heals.

Jaw pain may occur after the first 3 days. This is often due to inflammation and resulting immobility around the muscles which open and close the mouth. In addition to Tylenol, any oral motion such as chewing gum, swallowing, or drinking may be helpful.

**NAUSEA**

Nausea is quite common after surgery and may be associated with several factors including the anesthetic medication, or the pain medication (Lortab or Roxicet). Nausea and vomiting generally resolve after the first 12 hours.

Some tips to help you deal with nausea:

1. Avoid taking narcotic pain medications on a completely empty stomach.
2. If nausea or vomiting occur shortly after a dose of Lortab or Roxicet, then try taking plain Tylenol until the nausea improves.
3. Some patients find that small sips of ginger ale or a cola drink may help to relieve nausea. Small portions of bananas, applesauce, moistened graham crackers, or soda crackers may be helpful prior to taking medications.
4. You may wish to avoid acidic products such as orange juice.

**FEVER**

A low grade fever is common. This fever typically occurs in the late afternoon or evening and may reach 100 degrees F. Fevers usually improve with the prescription pain reliever or Tylenol. For temperatures higher than 100 F, please contact Dr. Golgert or the physician on call.

### BLEEDING FROM THE NOSE

There is a risk of bleeding during the first 3 weeks after surgery. The risk is generally highest in the first 24 hours, then 7 - 10 days after surgery when the eschar or scab begins to fall off.

Your child may experience drainage of a small amount of old, bloody mucus from the nose. Old blood from the nose is generally brown. This should resolve after the first 24 hours. Red blood is generally fresh blood and you should contact Dr. Golgert if this occurs.

### BLEEDING FROM THE MOUTH

You should contact Dr. Golgert immediately if your child experiences any bleeding from the mouth or if you notice a red or purple clot in the mouth or throat. If you are unable to contact Dr. Golgert immediately then you should call 911 or proceed to the nearest emergency room.

### DIET

As a rule, your child should begin with clear liquids such as ice chips or water then advance in color and texture until a soft diet is tolerated. Fluids make a tremendous difference in the healing process. If patients do not drink enough, they usually have worse pain. If after 24 hours, your child is unable to drink, then you should contact Dr. Golgert.

Tips for maintaining fluid intake:

- Begin with sips of water or ice chips or your child's favorite juice.
- Gatorade is an excellent fluid source and may also be frozen in cubes or ice chips.
- Classic favorites such as popsicles, smoothies, ice cream, frozen yogurt, yogurt, ice cream shakes, and other frozen drinks are usually tolerated well.
- Once the patient tolerates liquids then the diet may be advanced.
- Avoid hot (temperature) liquids or foods. After the first 18 hours, lukewarm foods are allowed. Some suggestions include: Lukewarm soup, macaroni or pastas, eggs, or other materials that are soft.
- A soft diet should be maintained for 3 weeks to minimize risk of postoperative bleeding.
- Do not eat sharp foods such as chips and avoid using straws which might hit the back of the throat and cause bleeding.
- Your child may brush the front of their teeth but do not brush at the back as this may promote bleeding.
- Do not allow children to run/walk with any objects such as straws in their mouth.

### ACTIVITY

Children will usually be out of school and daycare for a week. No strenuous or athletic activity is allowed during the 3 weeks following surgery. This includes any activity which may cause a significant elevation in the heart rate or blood pressure. Children should not participate in gym or PE (physical education) classes during this time.

### TRAVEL

During this 3 week postoperative period, travel outside of a 30 minute radius from Santa Barbara is not recommended.

### GARGLING

Rinsing the mouth with cool water or mouthwash is sometimes helpful.

FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT:

Dr. Golgert will see you a week after surgery, but call the office if concerns arise before the appointment.

EMERGENCIES

If you have any questions or concerns, then you may contact Dr. Golgert through the office number (805)563-1999. If Dr. Golgert is unavailable, then a doctor on call will be listed on the office message.

If you are unable to contact the doctor and there is an emergency then you should call 911 or proceed to the nearest emergency room.

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