Caring for Your Child after Tonsillectomy or Adenoidectomy

After surgery, it is normal to have:
- A low fever (below 101°F or 38.3°C, taken under the tongue).
- A sore throat that lasts 7 to 10 days, or as long as 14 days.
- Ear, jaw or neck pain. This may hurt the most about a week after surgery.
- Yellow or white-gray tissue where the tonsils were removed.
- A white film on the tongue. This will go away within 10 to 14 days.
- Bad breath for many days as the throat heals. Gentle tooth brushing is allowed. Do not have your child gargle.
- A change in the voice. This will go away in about three weeks.
- Snoring. This will usually improve over time.

Activity:
- Your child should avoid heavy or strenuous activity for one week.
- Keep your child home from school or daycare for at least 1 to 2 weeks.
  Your child may not return if he or she is still taking prescribed pain medicine.
- Back at school, your child should be excused from gym class or recess for 10 to 14 days.

Eating and drinking:
- Your child may want to avoid solid foods for the first week. Offer very soft, bland foods until your child feels better (macaroni, eggs, mashed potatoes, applesauce, cooked cereal, etc.). Avoid rough or crunchy foods for at least 7 days.
- Urge plenty of fluids—at least 24 to 64 ounces per day. Cool or lukewarm liquids may feel better at first. Sports drinks are a good choice. Avoid orange juice (which may burn).
- Young children may resist fluids because it hurts to drink or they need to feel in control. To help children cope, involve them in decision-making as much as you can.
  – Let your child pick out drinks and Popsicles at the grocery store.
  – Invite your child to help make blended drinks, slushies and frozen pops.
  – At first, offer small drinks in a medicine or Dixie cup. Slowly increase the cup size. You might also use a special cup or mug.
  – Have your child take a sip each time he or she rolls the dice in a board game.
  – Invite brothers, sisters and friends to a tea party.
  – Place stickers on a goal chart to reward your child for each sip of fluid.
- Avoid milk and milk products (yogurt, ice cream), if these make it harder to swallow.
- Avoid the use of a straw, if possible, for 7 days.
- If your child is old enough for chewing gum, this may help increase saliva and ease pain.
**Pain control:**
Pain is different for each person, and it can vary from day to day. It may start to get better and then get worse again, often peaking 3 to 7 days after surgery. This is common.

- It will hurt to swallow at first. The more your child can swallow, the less it will hurt.
- You may give prescribed pain medicine as needed. We will tell you how much to give and how often. Most children take this for several days after surgery, but some need it longer.
- After two days, you may replace some or all of the prescribed medicine with liquid Tylenol. Use this as directed.
- Talk to your doctor before giving ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) or other medicines within 10 days of surgery. Some medicines will increase the risk of bleeding.
- A humidifier may help ease a sore throat. You might also try an ice pack on the throat for 20 minutes. (Place a cloth between the skin and the ice pack.)

**Please return to our office in:** ☐ 10 to 14 days  ☐ 3 to 4 weeks
☐ You do not need to return to our office. A nurse will call to check on your child in 2 to 3 weeks.

**Symptoms to watch for:**
If your child has any **bleeding**, call your clinic right away. (If it’s after business hours, bring your child to the Emergency Room.) Bleeding may occur up to 2 weeks after surgery. Most children will spit out the blood. Some will swallow the blood and then vomit.

Call the doctor or nurse if your child has:

- **A fever over 101°F (38.3°C),** taken under the tongue, if the fever lasts more than 48 hours.
- **Nausea** (upset stomach), **vomiting** (throwing up) or **constipation** (hard, dry stools that are difficult to pass), if symptoms last longer than 48 hours.
- **Too little urine.** Your child should urinate (pee) at least twice every 24-hour period.

If your child has any **breathing problems**, call or go to the Emergency Room. (It is normal to have a stuffy nose after adenoid surgery. This is not an emergency.)

**Important phone numbers:**
☐ Ear, Nose & Throat Specialty Care: call _________________________ or
☐ 952-435-3050 (Burnsville)  ☐ 952-925-3905 (Edina)
☐ Minneapolis Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose and Throat clinic):
  ☐ 952-920-4595  ☐ 952-925-5626
☐ Southdale Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose and Throat clinic): 952-896-3166
☐ Lion’s Children’s Hearing ENT
  ☐ During office hours: 612-365-8336
  ☐ After hours: 612-365-2003 (ask to page the ENT resident who is on-call).
☐ Range: ENT nurse: 218-362-6890; scheduling: 218-362-6462