



Information for
patients and
carers

Tonsillectomy

What are tonsils and why have them removed?

Tonsils lie on both sides at the back of the throat and are clearly seen. Tonsils are glands which can become clinically infected which is why they are removed. Having your tonsils removed will not have any effect on the immune system as there are so many glands in the head and neck. They also help fight infection. They need removing when:

- Your child has at least 5 or more attacks of tonsillitis per year for 2 or more years, or 7 attacks in one year or 3 attacks a year for 3 consecutive years
- More than 1 quinsy (abscess around the tonsil)
- If 1 tonsil remains significantly larger than the other
- If the tonsils are significantly blocking the airway affecting breathing, especially at night

If the tonsils are repeatedly infected they swell and become painful. They cannot adequately fight infection and removal will solve these problems. There are other areas in the mouth i.e. tongue and sidewalls of the throat, that will fight infection.

What is a tonsillectomy?

It is a procedure to remove the tonsils and the technique depends on the surgeon.

How long will the operation take?

Your child will be away from the ward for approximately an hour.

What are the risks of a tonsillectomy?

- The tonsil 'bed' can bleed (approximately 5% of people). Your child may need to have the clots removed by suctioning, and/or gargling with a special liquid
- A secondary bleed, 5-14 days after surgery can occur usually

due to infection. This occurs in approximately 5% of people. Overall approximately 1% will need to go back to theatre (or may require a second anaesthetic)

- Your child may need to be re-admitted for antibiotics, most do not need further surgery
- Your child may need a drip to give them fluids if they cannot drink by mouth
- A blood transfusion maybe needed, however this is very rare

What happens after the operation?

Your child may be able to go home the same day, this will be assessed by your nurse. Your child will have to stay a minimum of 4 hours on the ward.

If you have to stay overnight you may be able to take part in the “Care by Parent” scheme. This scheme enables you to take your child home early the next morning, once they have eaten breakfast. The evening of the operation your child will see a doctor and your nurse will explain pain relief and care at home. You will stay with your child overnight in the hospital. The nurses will not disturb you unless you have any questions.

Caring for your child at home

As your child is at risk from infection, they will be unable to attend school for 2 weeks following the tonsillectomy and they will need to avoid being in contact with other people and crowded areas (shops, playgrounds and public transport) where they may be in contact with coughs and colds.

To aid recovery and help prevent complications it is very important to encourage your child to eat and drink frequently. Any type of food and drink can be given. Chewing gum (if old enough) helps keep the mouth moist and reduces painful muscle spasms.

Regular painkillers must be given for up to 10-14 days. You will take a combination of medicines which your nurse will explain how to administer.

After a tonsillectomy

- Ear ache is common
- Some children's voices will have a higher pitch for some time
- A growth spurt may occur
- A white area appears in the tonsil 'bed' and remains until the area 'heals over'
- Smelly breath can be a sign of not eating/drinking enough and can lead to an infection and maybe a bleed

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

If you have any concerns or queries please contact:

Ward 8 on telephone number: **01772 522245** or **07783848196**.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

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Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Cantonese:

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

Gujarati:

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઈચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

Hungarian:

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

Polish:

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

Urdu:

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

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