

Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy

Removal of the tonsils and adenoids (tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy) is one of the most commonly performed operations in the United States. The two most common reasons for this surgery are **sleep apnea** and **repeated infections**.

Sleep apnea

The tonsils and adenoids are often enlarged in children, a condition known as hypertrophy (enlargement). Sometimes they become so large that they block the airway during sleep. Blockage of the airway during sleep is called obstructive sleep apnea. Signs that your child may have sleep apnea include loud snoring at night with choking or gasping for air during sleep; constant mouth breathing; sleepiness during the daytime; poor growth; or behavioral problems. Being overweight or obese may also contribute to sleep apnea. Removal of the tonsils and adenoids can be helpful in reducing or eliminating sleep apnea, especially in children who have enlarged tonsils.

Repeated or chronic infections

Repeated strep throat infections (tonsillitis) are another common reason why tonsils are removed. Most pediatricians and ear, nose and throat doctors agree that tonsillectomy is appropriate if a child has:

- 7 infections in one year
- 5 infections per year for 2 years
- 3 infections per year for 3 years

Children who have chronic or ongoing tonsillitis lasting 3 or more months despite an extended course of antibiotics may also benefit from tonsillectomy.

What to expect after surgery

- **Pain:** For the first several days after surgery, pain in the throat is to be expected and usually resolves within the first 2 weeks. Pain is usually controlled with liquid Tylenol or with prescription pain medication.
- **Diet:** We recommend a soft diet for 10 days following surgery. Foods such as yogurt, pudding, smoothies, mashed potatoes, apple sauce and Jell-O are encouraged.
- **Fever:** A low-grade fever (less than 101.5 degrees) may occur
- **Physical activity:** Indoor quiet play is allowed 1-2 days after surgery, but strenuous physical activity should be avoided for 2 weeks. Children usually miss 1 week of school, but up to 2 weeks may be needed.
- **Bleeding:** Bleeding is unusual, but can occur up to 2 weeks after surgery. **Any** bleeding after surgery should be evaluated by a doctor.