

## Post-operative Instruction Sheet - Tonsillectomy +/- Adenoidectomy (Adult)

Tonsillectomy involves removal of the tonsil from the back of the throat. This may be performed in combination with removal of adenoid tissue from the back of the nose.

### **Pain control post-operatively**

- Having the tonsils removed is a painful procedure
- **I recommend that you take:** (depending on your situation your surgeon may have prescribed some or all the below listed medications)
  - **Regular paracetamol four times a day for the first 7-10 days after surgery**
  - **Regular ibuprofen three times a day for the first 7-10 days after surgery**
  - **Regular Prednisolone once daily for 10 days after surgery**
  - **Tapentadol (immediate release) every 6 hours or as required**
  - **Tapentadol (sustained release) morning and night for the first 7-10 days after surgery**
  - **Xylocaine mouthwash every 2-3 hours or as required**
  - **Ondansetron as required for nausea**
  - **Any other medications as prescribed (these are prescribed on a case-by-case basis)**
- Do not exceed the recommended dose of paracetamol as directed on the packet as this can result in serious complications
- **If none of the above measures can control the pain, please call the rooms for advice. If your surgeon is not in rooms or it is outside of normal business hours present to your local emergency department and/or GP where the options for extra pain relief may include:**
  - One off dose of dexamethasone 0.1mg/kg
  - 3-day course of prednisolone 1mg/kg/day
  - Oxycodone every six hours as required
- It is normal for the pain to fluctuate. Typically, the pain will reach a peak between days 3-7 but it will take about 2 weeks to settle completely
- It is normal to experience referred pain to the ears

### **Post-operative Diet**

- It is very important to maintain fluid intake after surgery. Whatever you can eat is acceptable, but fluids are the most important.
- The only thing to avoid is acidic based foods like citrus fruits and tomatoes as they may sting

### **Bleeding post-operatively**

- Secondary bleeding (>24hours after the surgery) can occur anytime in the two weeks following the operation but is more common in days 5-7
- It occurs in about 1-3% of adults undergoing tonsillectomy
- For this reason, it is important that you remain within an hour access to a hospital with ENT services for 2 weeks
- If there is more than a tablespoon of blood following the tonsillectomy, or persistent bleeding, you should present immediately to your closest emergency department for review. Please contact the rooms to update us should this occur

### **Post-operative antibiotics**

- There is no evidence to suggest that post-operative antibiotics reduce the rate of bleeding, pain or time to normal oral intake
- It is normal for the back of the throat to have a yellow-greenish covering after tonsillectomy performed. This is not an infection but the reaction of the normal healing tissue to saliva. You do not need to take antibiotics for this
- Some patients may have a foul-smelling breath after the operation. This is a normal part of the healing process. Unfortunately, antibiotics or mouth rinses do not affect the recovery of this.