

CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

PATIENT INFORMATION

POST-TONSILLECTOMY PAIN MANAGEMENT FOR CHILDREN: EDUCATION FOR CAREGIVERS

HOW LONG IS THE RECOVERY AFTER SURGERY?	Pain lasts about 7-10 days and can last as long as two weeks. Your child may complain of throat pain, ear pain and neck pain. The pain may be worse in the morning; this is normal. You should ask your child if they are having any pain every four hours remembering that they may not say they are in pain.
WILL MY CHILD BE TAKING PAIN MEDICATION?	Yes, your child will be prescribed pain medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Ibuprofen can be used safely after surgery. Pain medication should be given on a regular schedule. You may be asked to give pain medication around the clock for the first few days after surgery, waking your child up when he or she is sleeping at night. Alternating medication such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen may be recommended. Rectal acetaminophen may be given if your child refuses to take pain medication by mouth. Ask your child if their pain has improved after giving pain medication.
DOES MY CHILD NEED TO RESTRICT THEIR DIET AFTER SURGERY?	No, your child can eat as they normally would as long as it does not bother them. Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids like water or juice. Offer frequent small amounts of fluids by bottle, sippy cup or glass. Fluids can help with their pain. Encourage your child to chew and eat food including fruit snacks, popsicles, pudding, yogurt or ice cream.
WILL OTHER THINGS BESIDES PAIN MEDICATION HELP MY CHILD'S PAIN?	Yes, there are things other than medication that can also be utilized. You can distract your child by playing with them, having their favorite toys or video games available, applying a cold or hot pack to their neck and/or ears, blowing bubbles, doing an art project, coloring, watching television or reading a book.
WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I CANNOT MANAGE MY CHILD'S PAIN?	Call your healthcare provider.

SOURCE: Mitchell, RB, Archer, SA, Ishman, SL, et al. Clinical practice guideline: tonsillectomy in children (update). Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg. 2019;160 (Suppl 1):S1-S42.



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ABOUT THE AAO-HNS/F

The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) represents approximately 12,000 specialists worldwide who treat the ear, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The AAO-HNS Foundation works to advance the art, science, and ethical practice of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery through education, research, and lifelong learning.