



# Tonsillectomy: aftercare advice

## Information for patients from Day Surgery

### When you get home and for the first few days after your surgery

- Arrange for someone to collect you from hospital and look after you for the first 24 hours.
- You must rest for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.
- If you have had a general anaesthetic, avoid drinking alcohol, smoking, or taking sleeping tablets for 24 hours after your operation.
- If you have had a general anaesthetic, do not drive, cook, or operate any machinery for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.

### What should I do before I arrive at hospital?

- If you smoke you should give up, as smokers are more likely to suffer complications after their operation.
- Arrange to take two weeks off work. Do not plan anything important for two weeks after your surgery.
- Make sure you have a supply of paracetamol, co-codamol, or soluble tablets for the pain when you get home.

### Will I need stitches?

Stitches are not always used for this operation. If used, they will be dissolvable and disappear on their own over time.

### How long will I have to stay in hospital after my operation?

You will stay in hospital for four to six hours following your surgery.



## When can I start eating and drinking again?

- You will start eating and drinking as soon as you are awake after your surgery.
- We advise you to eat a normal diet, including rough, chewy foods such as crisps and toast. This will make sure your wound area stays clean while you heal. It may also reduce pain and the risk of infection.

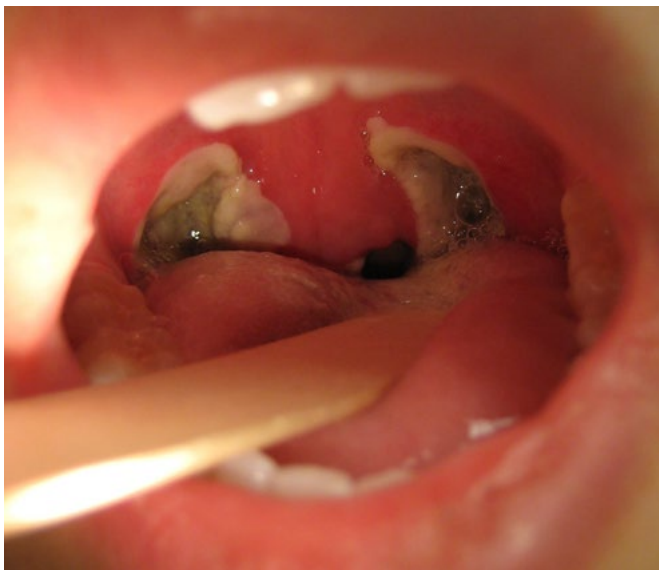
## Will I be sent home with pain medication?

Yes, you will be sent home with painkillers. Please follow the instructions below.

- You should take your calculated dose of regular paracetamol (or Calpol ©) four times a day **and** ibuprofen three times a day for seven days, and then as needed for a further week.
- You may be given a mouthwash or spray to reduce your pain as well.
- We advise you take soluble painkilling tablets about half an hour before meals, as swallowing will be painful.

## What should I expect following my surgery?

- You can expect pain following your surgery, which may get worse in the first five days; this pain usually goes away within 10 days. Do not skip a dose of painkillers for the first seven days as not eating and drinking due to pain can affect how you heal, and may lead to bleeding or infection.
- You may also notice the area where your tonsils used to be appears white like a wet scab; this is usual after surgery and a normal part of healing. This may cause you to have bad breath.



**Normal appearance after surgery**

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**Swollen uvula is expected**

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## How long can I stay off work?

You should stay off work/school and not exercise for two weeks.

## When should you come to the hospital?

- Bleeding within two weeks of surgery is one of the most common complications following tonsillectomy.
- If you start bleeding, lean forward to allow the blood from your mouth to drain out. Do not swallow the blood as it can make you feel sick.
- If there is more than a teaspoon of fresh blood, we advise you to come back to the hospital immediately to be checked. You will need to stop eating or drinking in case you need an operation when you arrive at the hospital.

## What should I do if I have any concerns or questions?

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Rotary Outpatients or Day Surgery on the numbers below, or phone your GP.

- **Rotary Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Outpatients**, William Harvey Hospital, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 61 62 61 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am to 3pm)
- Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 61 62 63 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury  
Telephone: 01227 78 31 14 (7:30am to 8pm)  
Telephone: 07887 68 76 45 (8pm to 7:30am)
- Day Surgery Unit, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 23 44 99 (7:30am to 8pm)  
Telephone: 07887 65 11 62 (8pm to 7:30am)

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)