

Tonsillectomy: *Home Instructions*

What is it?

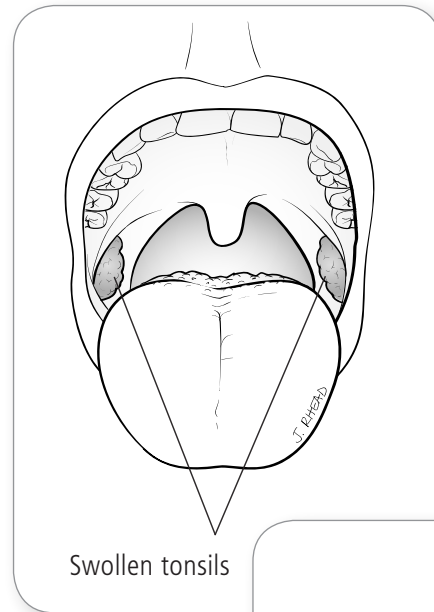
Tonsillectomy is a procedure to remove your tonsils, which are located at the back and sides of your throat. Tonsils normally help defend your body against infection. But if the tonsils become swollen or infected and medication does not help, your doctor may recommend a tonsillectomy. Your body will fight infection in other ways.

There are a number of ways your doctor can remove your tonsils. With some methods you have general anesthesia so you sleep through the procedure. With others you remain awake, but have local anesthesia to numb the area. Often there is a small amount of bleeding and discomfort, but most patients go home the day of surgery.

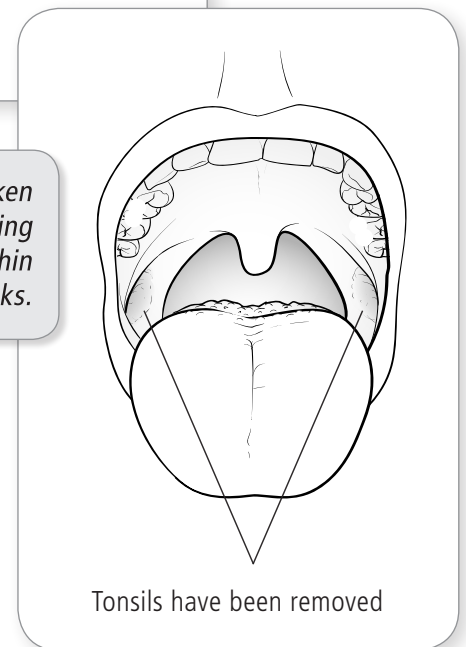
What should I expect after the procedure?

After the procedure, you'll feel some side effects for several days. You should be back to normal within 2 weeks. These are some effects you might experience:

- Sore throat
- Trouble swallowing
- Nausea and vomiting
- Bad breath
- Ear pain
- Slight fever up (less than 101°F)
- Blood in your saliva (after 10 to 14 days when the scabs fall off)
- White patches of skin over the surgery site



After your tonsils are taken out, you should be feeling back to normal within 2 to 3 weeks.



How do I care for myself at home?

Pain management

After your tonsillectomy, your pain may increase for a few days. After about 7 days, it should gradually decrease.

- **Only use the pain medication your doctor recommends.** Your doctor will tell you what you can take. You may be told not to take anti-inflammatory medications, such as aspirin or ibuprofen.
- **Take your pain medication as soon as you need it.** It's easier to control pain before it gets too bad. If you take your pain medication right away, you may not need to take as much.
- **Try using ice.** You can also relieve pain by eating ice chips, or by holding an ice pack to your neck.

Diet

Good nutrition is important after your surgery. Getting the protein and calories you need will help your body heal. Here are some ideas of ways to eat that may feel better on your throat.

- **Keep your throat wet.** The first day after your tonsillectomy, drink cool liquids, such as water, frozen juice bars, sports drinks, or soda.
- **Eat foods that are easy to chew and swallow.** Within the first 24 hours, try to start eating more foods. Good choices include:
 - Cold foods such as frozen juice bars, ice cream, and gelatin
 - Liquid foods such as soup (lukewarm), yogurt, pudding, and applesauce
 - Soft foods such as bread, cereal, pasta, and eggs

- **Avoid foods that may irritate your throat.**

Foods to avoid include:

- Scratchy foods such as tortilla chips, crackers, nuts, fresh vegetables, or popcorn
- Acidic foods such as orange juice, grapefruit juice, lemonade, and tomatoes
- High fat or greasy foods, such as bacon, fries, and hamburgers

- **Gradually return to your regular diet** after about a week. Be sure to chew your food well to avoid irritating your throat.

Rest and activity

You'll heal faster if you get the rest you need after your surgery.

- Rest for a few days after your tonsillectomy.
- Don't be too active for 2 to 3 weeks. Increase your level of activity slowly.
- Ask your doctor when you can return to work or school. How soon you can return depends on the specific type of procedure used to remove your tonsils.

Follow-up appointment

Ask your doctor when you should make a follow-up appointment. It's important for your doctor to make sure you're healing well.

When should I contact my doctor?

Contact your doctor if you:

- Vomit, spit, or cough bright red blood
- Have a fever above 101°F or chills that last more than 12 hours
- Have nausea or vomiting that does not stop
- Have pain you cannot control