



Immediate Postoperative Instructions for Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy

Below are instructions that you should follow after your child's tonsillectomy or adenoidectomy procedure. Note that these immediate postoperative instructions also apply to laryngoscopy, bronchoscopy and some laser procedures, including supraglottoplasty.

Pain Medication

Afterwards, there will be two types of pain medicine. Children's Motrin every four to six hours does not make it perfect but often good enough, so most patients can eat or at least drink. If it is not good enough, there is also a prescription for acetaminophen with hydrocodone (or separately acetaminophen) and a separate prescription for oxycodone. Hydrocodone and oxycodone are both great for pain but can make some patients sick to their stomachs. This is why doctors do not like to use these as the only pain medicines.

Early on, you will probably need to wake your child every four to six hours (even in the middle of the night) to give him or her pain medication. If you let your child sleep all the way through the night, then you are starting all over again the next morning with pain control.

Antibiotic

There may be a prescription for an antibiotic to help with healing. This is not required in every case.

Stomach Acid Medication

If your child's doctor has to trim in the voice box, there may be a prescription for some medicine to keep stomach acid from coming up.

Eating Afterwards

Your child can eat or drink whatever he or she wants afterwards, even if he or she wants pizza or french fries. Whatever goes down is fine. There are no restrictions. Your child's doctor just wants to make sure your child does not get dehydrated.

Expected Pain

The pain will be whatever it is to start. Then it will get better over a number of days. Most patients complain about ear pain seven to 10 days after the surgery, even though there is nothing wrong with the ears. It is just the way we heal. We feel it in the ears.