



## ADENOIDECTOMY

Adenoids are mounds of tissue related to lymph nodes that are found at the back of the nose. They are a small part of the many lymph nodes that make up our immune system. Removing them has not been shown to affect immune function. They are present in everyone at birth and may become quite large, especially in childhood, but will often shrink in size as a person grows older. At times, the adenoids may harbor infectious bacteria or viruses causing frequent ear infections or sinusitis, or become so large that they block nasal breathing. Rarely the adenoids may harbor growths, tumors, or other lesions.

### REASONS FOR SURGERY- How is the decision made?

Removal of the adenoids is a decision to be made between the surgeon and the patient or family. Generally, removal is recommended when one or more of the following symptoms or findings are noted:

- Frequent sinus infections in children with foul smelling or yellow nasal drainage
- Chronic nasal obstruction with mouth breathing, dental crowding, and high arched palate
- Breathing problems with snoring, pauses in breathing, poor sleep or restlessness, excessive daytime tiredness, attention difficulties, bed-wetting, or poor school performance are noted
- Frequent or recurrent ear infections
- Other problems as discussed with your doctor

### SURGICAL TREATMENT- What are the Risks, Alternatives, Potential Complications, and Benefits?

- **Risks-** The greatest risk from adenoidectomy is from **bleeding** at the surgical site. The estimated frequency of bleeding from adenoidectomy is around one in six thousand patients. This may occur anytime after the surgery, but the risk is generally greatest immediately after surgery, and again about 7-10 days later when healing allows the scab to fall off. There is also a small risk of complications from anesthesia.
- **Alternatives-** Most surgery on the adenoids is elective, which means that you may choose to have no treatment or to treat the problem with medication or by other means. Sometimes a decision to not have treatment can have serious consequences that you should discuss with your doctor.
- **Complications-** The most severe complication is bleeding that could result in the need for a blood transfusion or death. This is extremely rare. There is also a small risk of scarring, injury to the teeth, throat, tongue, other structures of the mouth, throat, or neck, changes in voice quality, leaking of fluid from the nose when drinking, or re-growth of the adenoid tissue requiring repeated surgery. **Notify your doctor immediately if any bleeding from the nose or mouth is noted after surgery.**
- **Benefits-** Most adenoid surgery is without complications. Success in relieving most conditions is excellent.

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**RECOVERY-** What should I expect?

Recovery generally lasts 1-2 weeks, often less in children, and sometimes longer in adults. Most people can go home the same day of surgery after observation for a short period of time. Once you have gone home, common events in the recovery period and expectations of what is normal are listed below.

Call your doctor if you have any questions or concerns that are not answered here.

- **Pain-** Pain is an expected part of recovery after surgery. Pain may be noted in the throat, back of the neck, or in the ears (which can be quite severe), jaw, or mouth. This is treated with oral pain medication:

**TYLENOL® ELIXIR \_\_\_\_\_ MG every 4 hours by mouth as needed for pain, AND IBUPROFEN ELIXIR \_\_\_\_\_MG every 6 hours by mouth as needed for pain.**

It is important to take the medication at regular intervals, including waking up at night to take it. This will help avoid waking in pain which can make taking more medicine difficult. **Take only the medication prescribed by your doctor.** It is common for pain to worsen three to four days after surgery. This is a result of the steroid medication that was given in surgery wearing off. Pain should improve in the next few days. If pain is not relieved by the medication taken as prescribed, call your doctor.

- **Bad breath-** This is very common and sometimes bothersome. This is normal and occurs from the bacteria that grow on the scab in the back of the nose where the adenoids once were. Eating and drinking will wash this away and improve this complaint.
- **Nausea and vomiting-** These are usually due to the effects of anesthesia and should subside in the first day or two. If they continue, are related to taking the pain medication, or contain blood, notify your doctor.
- **Fever-** A low grade temperature of less than 102° F for a few days after surgery is normal. Notify your doctor for fever above this, or one that persists for greater than 3 days.
- **Eating and drinking-** Many people are reluctant to eat and drink due to pain after surgery. It is important that drinking is encouraged to avoid dehydration. Ice chips, popsicles, Jell-O, as well as juices (avoid citrus) and water are generally well tolerated. Signs of dehydration include loose skin, sunken eyes or absence of tears, dark yellow or orange urine, or the failure to urinate at least twice a day. Call your doctor if unable to take liquids or signs of dehydration are noted.
- **Activity-** It is recommended that heavy lifting, exertion, and other strenuous activity be avoided for one to two weeks after surgery. Children should stay home from school for the first week. They may return the second week, but should refrain from participating in recess or gym. Do not drive or operate machinery while on pain medication.
- **MEDICATIONS-** Ask your doctor about resuming your home medications. Do not take herbal medications without asking your doctor as these often have blood thinning properties which can increase the risk of bleeding

**CONTINUING CARE-** What additional care do I need after surgery?

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Your doctor will see you for follow-up evaluation in approximately two weeks after surgery unless another time has been arranged. Call the office if an appointment has not been previously scheduled. At this time, most healing is complete, pain has resolved, and a regular diet is well tolerated.