



Patient & Family Guide  
2019

# Your Child's Tonsillectomy and/or Adenoidectomy Surgery

Valley Regional Hospital



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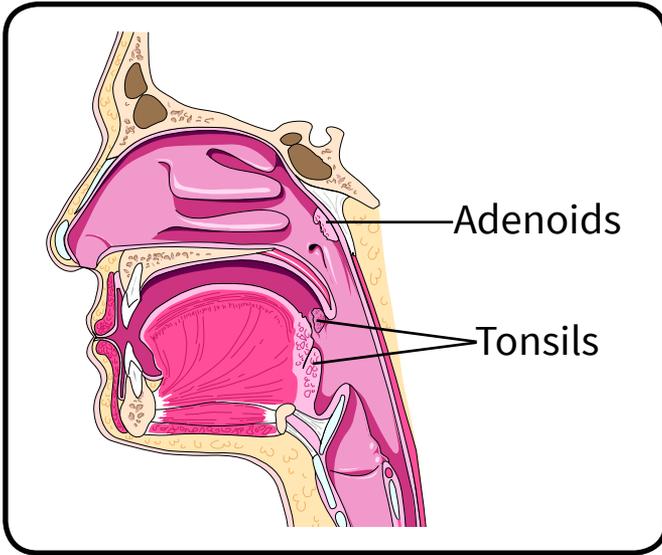
Your child needs **tonsillectomy** and/or **adenoidectomy** surgery.

## What is a tonsillectomy?

- Tonsillectomy is surgery to remove **tonsils**. Tonsils are glands on each side of the throat. They trap germs that enter the throat. They also make antibodies to help fight infections.
- **Tonsillitis** is when your tonsils get infected and swollen. Symptoms include a sore throat, fever, pain when swallowing, and swollen glands.

## What is an adenoidectomy?

- Adenoidectomy is surgery to remove the **adenoids**. Adenoids are glands at the back of the nose, where the nose blends into the mouth and throat. Adenoids trap harmful bacteria and viruses that are breathed in. They also make antibodies to help fight infections.
- **Adenoiditis** is when your adenoids get infected and swollen. Symptoms include snoring, trouble sleeping through the night, a sore throat, trouble swallowing, and/or ear problems. Your child may also have a very stuffy nose and only be able to breathe through their mouth.



## How do we get ready for surgery?

- Talk to your child well before the surgery. Answer their questions honestly and give simple explanations. A young child might like to practice using a doll or stuffed animal and a toy doctor's kit.
- Get ready for going home after the surgery by stocking up on easy-to-swallow favourites, such as juices, popsicles, ice cream, yogurt, or Jell-O®. Watch your child when they are eating popsicles, to make sure they don't hurt the back of their throat. Have other soft foods available, such as pasta, soup, oatmeal, and applesauce.

- Bring your child's favourite items to the hospital, such as stuffed animals, blankets, a pillow, or other comfort items. To help pass the time, bring items that your child can play with quietly. Colouring books and crayons, books, puzzles, music and movies, a portable DVD player, hand-held video games, and other games will help to keep your child busy.

## The morning of surgery

- On the morning of the surgery, bring your child to Valley Regional Hospital Central Registry in the main lobby. Next, you will go to the Maternal/Child Unit on the 3rd floor, where a nurse will get your child ready for surgery. When your child is ready, a porter will take you and your child to the OR (Operating Room). You can then return to the Maternal/Child Unit to wait during your child's surgery.
- Your child will be given a **general anesthetic** (medication to put them to sleep for surgery). This will make your child sleep through the surgery and they will not feel any pain. While your child is asleep, the surgeon will remove their tonsils and/or adenoids through their mouth. Your child will not have stitches. The surgery usually takes 20-40 minutes.

- After the surgery, your child will go to the recovery room. This is where they will wake up from the anesthetic. They will stay in the recovery room for about one hour. We will then bring them to you on the Maternal & Child Unit. You should expect to stay at the hospital for at least 6 hours after the surgery.

## **What can I expect after the surgery?**

- Most children will be sleepy for several hours after the surgery. They will become more awake as the anesthetic wears off. Most children are able to go home on the day of the surgery. Some children may need to stay in the hospital overnight for observation.
- When your child wakes up, they may have a sore throat or earache. We will give them pain medicine (usually liquid Tylenol®). Encourage your child to drink fluids, even if it hurts a bit at first. This will help them to feel better and recover faster.
- Hospital staff will check your child's temperature often. Your child will have an intravenous (IV) tube in their arm. It will be taken out when it is no longer needed. The nurses will watch your child for vomiting (throwing up) or bleeding. They will tell the doctor if there are any complications. Your

child may vomit thick brownish-coloured liquid. This is normal. If your child keeps vomiting, the nurse will give them medicine through their IV to help settle their stomach.

## **Tonsillectomy only:**

- Rarely, patients have bleeding after a tonsillectomy. This usually happens within 2 weeks after surgery. If your child has bleeding, they may need to stay in the hospital longer.
- Because swallowing feels painful after surgery, your child may not want to eat or drink as much as they should. If your child isn't getting the fluids they need, they may need to stay in the hospital longer.

## **When can we leave the hospital?**

You can leave the hospital when your child:

- › is able to drink fluids without throwing up,
- › is getting good pain control from liquid medicine,
- › has no bleeding,
- › is fully alert,

And when you feel ready to care for your child at home.

## Before going home

- Your nurse will tell you about your child's followup appointment and prescriptions, and how to care for your child at home. If your child had a tonsillectomy, we strongly suggest having 2 responsible adults in the car on the way home — one to tend to the child and one to drive.
- If you live more than an hour away from the hospital, you may need to make arrangements to stay closer to the hospital on the first night. Please talk about this with your surgeon.
- Your child will need to stay home from daycare or school for 1-2 weeks after surgery. Please talk about this with your doctor.
- **We highly recommend that your child be cared for in a smoke-free environment. Please do not smoke in your car or at home, and ask others not to smoke around your child. Breathing in smoke slows down healing.**
- For more info on how to care for your child at home, please make sure you have the pamphlet *After Your Child's Tonsillectomy and/or Adenoidectomy Surgery: Valley Regional Hospital*.

# Notes:

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## Compliments? Concerns?

We want to know!

Safe care and quality service is our goal.

We value your feedback.

Call our Patient Satisfaction Line at:

902-679-2494 or (toll-free) 1-800-866-9757

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For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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*Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.