

Tonsillectomy

Valley Regional Hospital

My surgery is on:

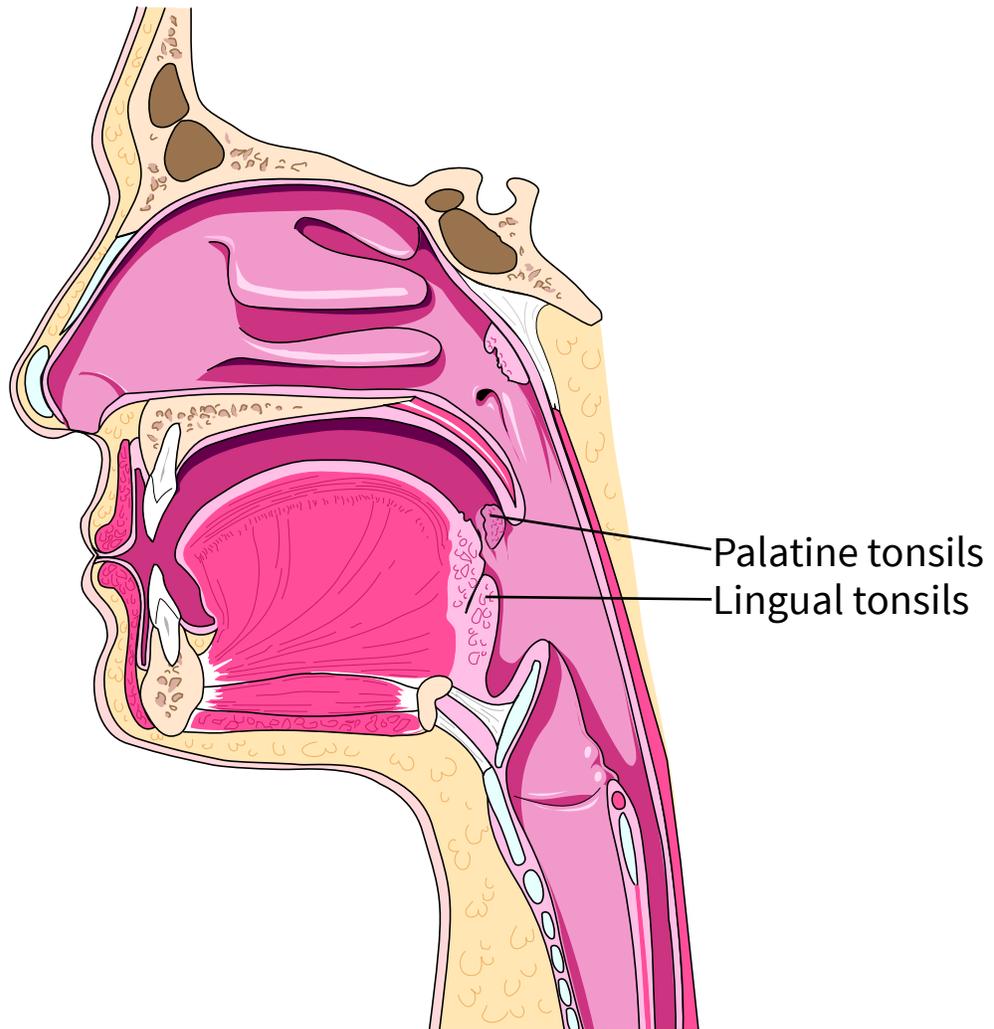
Date: _____

Time: _____

Tonsillectomy

What is a tonsillectomy?

- A tonsillectomy is a surgery to take out your tonsils.
- Your tonsils are on the sides of your throat.



Getting ready for surgery

- You may need tests before your surgery. This will depend on your general health and the type of surgery you are having. Staff will contact you to arrange for testing before surgery, if needed.
- **Plan to have a responsible adult drive you home and stay with you the first 48 hours (2 days) after your surgery.** This is for your safety.
- If you take medication, please talk with your surgeon before your surgery. They will tell you which medications to take before your surgery with a sip of water, and which ones to stop taking.
- Stock up on fluids like water, juice, Gatorade® or Powerade®, milkshakes, and soups.
- Have acetaminophen (Tylenol®) on hand.

Medications

For 14 days (2 weeks) before your surgery:

- **Do not** take any natural or herbal medications or products. These may cause more bleeding.



For 10 days before your surgery:

- **Do not** take ASA (acetylsalicylic acid, Aspirin®).

For 7 days (1 week) before your surgery:

- **Do not** take ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®).

It is OK to take acetaminophen (Tylenol®).

The night before your surgery

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery.



The morning of your surgery

- Do not eat or drink anything before your surgery.
- You may take your medications as told by your surgeon with sips of water.
- You may brush your teeth.
- Follow any directions you were given at the Pre-Admissions Clinic (if you had an appointment there).
- Take off all make-up and jewelry before coming to the hospital.
- If you have long hair, pull it back with an elastic.
- We recommend that your face is clean shaven.
- Nova Scotia Health is smoke-free and scent-free. Please respect this policy. **Do not** use scented products (like perfume, after shave, scented hair spray).

Tell your surgeon if you:

- › Become sick (have diarrhea [loose, watery poop], vomiting [throwing up], nausea [upset stomach]) before your surgery
- › Have a cough, cold, or fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
- Give yourself plenty of time to find parking.

Bring with you on the day of your surgery:

- Provincial health (MSI) card
- Private medical insurance card (if you have one)
- All of your medications (including prescription and over-the-counter products, inhalers, creams, eye drops, patches, herbal products, vitamins, and supplements) in their original containers
- CPAP machine (if you use one)
- A container or bag for the ride home in case you vomit

My appointment

- **Your surgery may be cancelled if you are late.**
- **If you are not able to keep your appointment, call the booking office as soon as possible:**
 - › Phone: 902-679-2657, extension 2401
- Arrive 2 hours before your scheduled surgery time or at the time your surgeon's office told you.
 - › If your surgery is scheduled for 8 a.m., please arrive by 6:15 a.m.
- **Go through the main entrance and register at Central Registration.**
- Delays in the O.R. may cause a change in your surgery time. There is a chance that your surgery may be cancelled if there is an emergency. If this happens, your surgeon's office will call you to arrange a new date.

Important:

- **You must have a responsible adult stay in the hospital during your surgery.**
- **After your surgery, you must have a responsible adult take you home.**

After surgery

- When you go back to your hospital room, you may be asked to rinse your mouth.
- Your nurse will bring you ice water. **It is important to start drinking right away, even if your throat feels sore.** If you do not drink, your throat will hurt more and swell, and may start to bleed.
- It is normal for your throat to hurt. We will give you pain medication to help with this.
- You may have an ice pack to help with the discomfort in your throat.
- If you feel sick to your stomach, ask your nurse for medication to help with this.
- Your intravenous (I.V.) will be taken out when you are drinking well and not feeling sick to your stomach.
- **Do not** get up by yourself for the first time after your surgery. You may still be drowsy. Ring your call bell and your nurse will help you.
- **Do not** smoke. Smoking will slow your healing.
- You may eat whatever foods you can tolerate.
 - › **Do not** eat foods with sharp edges (like potato chips). Sharp edges on foods can catch on your incisions (cuts) and cause them to bleed.



After discharge

To lower the pressure inside your head and lower the risk of bleeding:

- Try to cough or sneeze with your mouth open
- Try not to strain (like when pooping)
 - › Eat foods with more fibre (like bran and fruit) as needed.

Discomfort

- It is normal to have an earache and throat pain for 2 to 3 weeks after surgery.
 - › Your surgeon will give you a prescription for pain medication.
- Adults should also take Tylenol® regularly for the first 2 days or more after your surgery. Follow the directions on the package. Tylenol® helps the prescription pain medication work and may lower the dose (amount) you need.
- **Use caution or avoid taking Aspirin® (ASA or acetylsalicylic acid), Advil® (ibuprofen), or similar medications unless your surgeon has told you otherwise.** If you have bleeding after surgery, these medications may make it worse.
- Pain medications will not take away all your pain, but they will make it easier to handle.
- **Do not** drink alcohol while taking pain medication.
- If your pain is not getting better even after taking pain medication, you may take a caffeine tablet or drink 1/3 cup of coffee to help your pain medication work better.
 - › **Do not** take caffeine if you have high blood pressure or your doctor has told you to avoid caffeine.



Drinking and eating

- Drink as much as possible (at least 2 to 3 litres a day). **Do not** stop drinking even if your throat hurts (your urine should be clear if you drink enough).
 - › Start by drinking clear fluids (like water).
- You may drink milkshakes and eat puddings or anything else you can tolerate right after your surgery.
- **Do not** eat foods hot enough to be uncomfortable in your mouth.
- **Do not** eat foods with sharp edges (like potato chips, toast, and other dry foods). Sharp edges on foods can catch on your incisions (cuts) and cause them to bleed.
- Chew all foods well before swallowing. Taking sips of water with your food may help you to swallow more easily.

Activity

For 2 days after your surgery:

- Do not drive a car.



For 14 days after your surgery:

- Do not do vigorous (hard) exercise (like cardio, lifting weights)
- Do not take part in sports.
- Do not dance.
- Do not have sex.
- Do not use a sauna or a hot tub.
- Do not take hot baths or showers. A lukewarm bath or shower is OK.
- Do not sunbathe.
- Talk with your surgeon if you plan to go to a sports event or take a long trip.
- Get enough rest.
- Your doctor will talk with you about when you can go back to work or school and other activities.

Bleeding

- You may have bleeding for up to 14 days (2 weeks) after your surgery.
- A wet scab may come off your incision about 7 days after your surgery. This is common. This may cause a little bleeding.

If the bleeding does not stop:

1. Rest.
2. Put a cold compress on your neck (also called an **ice collar**).
3. Rinse your throat with small amounts of cold water.

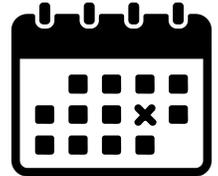
If the bleeding still does not stop, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

Other

- You may see large, white patches or a white coating in your throat. This is common while you are healing. It is **not** a sign of infection.
- You may have very bad breath. This is normal.

Follow-up

- You will get an appointment with your surgeon 4 to 6 weeks after your surgery. Keep all of your follow-up appointments.



Call your surgeon or your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) if you have:

- › Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F) after the first 48 hours (2 days)
- › Pain that does not go away even after taking pain medication

If you cannot reach them, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you:

- › Have not been able to drink anything for 24 hours (1 day) or more
- › Have not peed for 24 hours (1 day) or more (you may be dehydrated and need I.V. fluids)
- › See a lot of blood in your spit (more than a few streaks)

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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