

PATIENT INFORMATION

A publication of Jackson-Madison County General Hospital Surgical Services

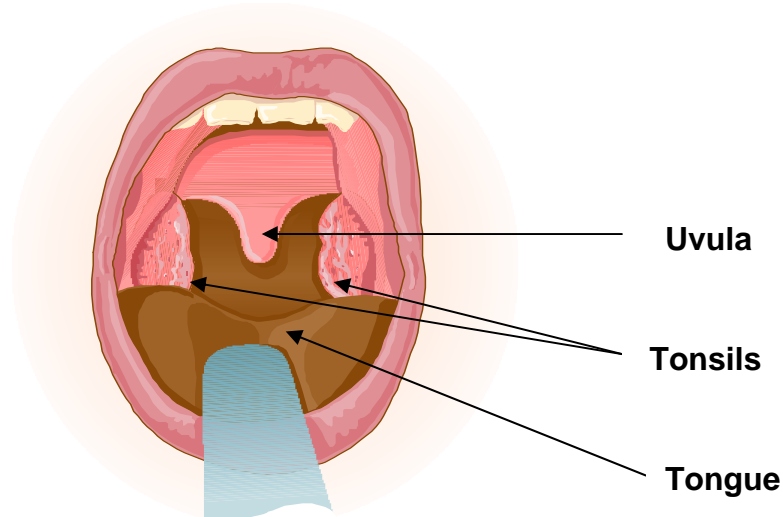
Tonsillectomy

You are scheduled to have a Tonsillectomy (removal of the tonsils from the throat). The purpose of this handout is to help you know how to prepare for this surgery and what to expect during your surgery.

It is the hope of the surgery staff that you will feel that you receive very good care while you are a patient in our hospital. **We are here to serve you!** Please feel free to ask any questions that you might have.

What is a tonsillectomy?

The tonsils are masses of glandular tissue that are located on either side of the back of the throat. They are similar to lymph nodes and are part of the body's immune system. They sit at the entrance to the breathing passages and catch germs coming into the system. The most common problem with tonsils happens when they frequently become infected causing the patient to run fever and have sore throats and other symptoms. This is called tonsillitis.



If infections are frequent or severe, the tonsils may need to be removed. Children or adults who have had their tonsils removed do not seem to suffer from any more infections than people with tonsils.

What do I need to do before my surgery?

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery.
- Please do not chew gum. (This raises the level of acid in your stomach.)
- If you are taking medicine for your blood pressure, heart, or asthma you may take this with a small sip of water the morning of your surgery. If you take diabetes medicines and/or insulin, talk with your doctor about whether you should take them. If you take Glucophage® (Metformin), do not take this the morning of your surgery.

- You may brush your teeth and rinse your mouth as long as you do not swallow any water.
- Please remove all nail polish.
- Please remove all jewelry including body piercings.
- Do not wear makeup.
- On the day of your surgery:
 - Wear comfortable clothing that is loose fitting, easy to get into and not tight through the neck.
 - Bring all medicines that you take to the hospital with you.
 - Do not bring anything valuable or large amounts of money with you to the hospital.
 - Have a responsible adult drive you to the hospital and stay during your surgery. **You will not be allowed to drive yourself home.**

What can I expect the day of my surgery?

- After you have been to the Admitting Office you will be taken to a room. This may not be the room where you will be taken after surgery.
- You will be given a hospital gown and asked to remove all of your clothes. **Cotton** underwear and socks may be worn. Put on the gown opening in the back.
- You will be asked questions about your medical history. Many of these will be the same questions that you have already been asked. Please know that we need to ask these again so that we can give you the best possible care.
- You may go to the Pre-Anesthesia Area (PAU) to get ready for your surgery, or you may get ready in your room.
- Your nurse will tell your family where to wait.
- If you are a teenager or an adult, you will have an IV (a needle in your arm for fluids) started. You will be given medicine to help you relax. Most children age 7 and under are given medicine by mouth that will make them sleepy. Their IV is started after they are asleep in the operating room.
- If you are prepared for surgery in PAU, you will have sticky pads put on your chest so the staff can watch your heart. A blood pressure cuff will be put on your arm so that your blood pressure can be checked. A device called a pulse oximeter will be put on your finger. This will tell how much oxygen is in your blood. If you do not go to PAU before your surgery, these things will be done in the operating room.
- Someone from anesthesia (the person who will put you to sleep) will talk to you.
- When your doctor is ready for you, you will be taken to the operating room. The room will be cold. You will be given a warm blanket.
- Your team in the operating room will include your doctor and his assistant, an anesthesiologist, a circulating nurse, and a scrub nurse. All of these people are there to take care of you and no one else.
- The anesthesiologist will place a soft mask over your face. This will give you plenty of oxygen to breathe. You will be given medicine in your IV that will relax you until you go to sleep. The anesthesiologist will give you medicine so that you will sleep through the operation and you will not wake up during the surgery.

- When the operation has started, the nurse will call your family. They will call your family at least every hour during the surgery.
- When the operation is over, the anesthetist will give you medicine that will help you to wake up. You will be taken to the Recovery Room.
- The doctor will talk with your family.
- When you start to wake up, you will notice that you are getting oxygen either in your nose or through a mask over your face. When you are able to take deep breaths this will be removed. There will be a nurse taking care of you. He or she will be watching your blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen level.
- If you are in pain or feel sick at your stomach, please let the nurse know so that you can be given medicine.
- When you are awake, you will be taken back to your room. There will be a nurse taking care of you. He or she will check you often.
- You will be given ice chips or juice soon after you return to your room. Later, you may be given fluids, gelatin, ice cream, or popsicles.
- Your throat will be very sore and raw feeling.
- Ask for help the first time that you try to get out of the bed. **Do not try to get up without help.**
- Most people are able to go home later the same day or the next day.

What should I do when I go home?

- Your doctor will give you guidelines to follow. Be sure to follow his or her instructions.
- Do not drive or operate machinery until your doctor says that you can.
- Rest and do not exert yourself. Your doctor will talk with you about when you can return to your normal activities.
- Avoid bending forward from the waist so that your head is lower than your chest.
- Your throat will be sore for several days to two weeks. Ice chips or cold soft foods like pudding and ice cream may soothe your throat. It is important that you drink plenty of fluids for the first few days. Your doctor will talk to you about what you can eat.
- You may take Tylenol[®] if needed for pain but do not take anything that contains aspirin. Your doctor will also give you medicine that you can use for worse pain. Do not take Tylenol[®] and your pain medicine at the same time (many of the pain medicines have Tylenol[®] in them). Call your doctor if your pain is not relieved by your pain medicine.
- Call the doctor if you have a fever above 100.5° twice.
- Call your doctor if you have any bleeding from the back of your throat, even if this happens several days to two weeks after your surgery.
- You will be out of school or work for at least two weeks or as directed by your physician.
- Call your doctor if you have any other questions or concerns.
- Please be sure to keep your follow-up appointment with your doctor.
- Continue to avoid aspirin products, Motrin[®], Aleve[®], and blood thinners after surgery.