

TONSILLECTOMY

Patient and Family Information

What is a tonsillectomy?

Tonsillectomy is a procedure performed to remove the tonsils. The palatine tonsils are located at the back of the mouth.

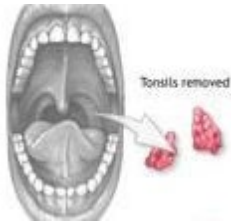


Image Source: A.D.A.M 2018

Why do I need this surgery?

There are different reasons for undergoing a tonsillectomy:

- **Recurrent tonsillitis:** repeated episodes of tonsil infections.
- **Quinsy:** an infective collection (abscess) forming in the tissues around the tonsils.
- **Obstructive sleep apnoea:** a condition affecting the breathing during sleep due to the narrowing or collapse of the airway, which may be caused by enlarged tonsils.
- Suspicion of **cancer** involving the tonsils.

What does this surgery involve?

The surgery is performed under general anaesthesia. After general anaesthesia has been administered, a device is inserted to keep the mouth open. The tonsils are removed through the mouth using various methods such as using an electrical instrument.

What are the risks associated with this surgery?

There are potential complications associated with any surgery. This may pertain to the administration of general anaesthesia or the surgical procedure itself. You should speak to your doctor about these risks. Some of the potential complications after a tonsillectomy include:

- Pain
- Bleeding (5%): you may need to be admitted to the hospital and/or have another operation to stop the bleeding if there is delayed bleeding.
- Infection
- Injury to the lips, gum, teeth, tongue or jaw
- Taste disturbance

What are my alternative options?

Undergoing a tonsillectomy will prevent tonsillitis/quinsy but will not prevent a sore throat from other causes. You may opt for conservative management with antibiotics to treat each episode of tonsil infection.

What can I expect immediately after surgery?

You may be discharged on the day of the surgery.

You may experience some pain or discomfort after the operation, and this may increase for a few days before improving.

It is important to eat and drink properly after the surgery, as well as take your antibiotics and pain medications as prescribed. Doing otherwise may lead to an increased risk of complications, particularly the risk of infection and bleeding.

Dietary plans and restrictions after tonsillectomy

Patients should:

- **Increase fluid intake** such as water, juice, isotonic drinks.
- **Take cold food** such as popsicles, ice-cream or jelly. These are ideal as the colder temperature may help to reduce pain and swelling.
- **Take soft food** such as porridge, soup and mashed potatoes.

Patients should avoid:

- **Hot food** as it can cause pain for some patients. Allow the food to cool before serving where possible.
- **Hard food** such as potato chips and other crunchy items, as these foods can cause pain when swallowing.

Should you have any pre or post operation queries, please call us at 6772 4551 or email us at ent_fc@nuhs.edu.sg.

For urgent medical attention, please walk into the clinic during operating hours (Monday to Friday, between 8.30am to 5.30pm) or visit the Emergency Department after clinic hours.

Reference:

- A.D.A.M:
<http://www.adam.com>

National University Hospital

5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074

OneNUHS Hotline: (65) 6908 2222

OneNUHS General Enquiries: contactus@nuhs.edu.sg

OneNUHS Appointments: appointment@nuhs.edu.sg

www.nuh.com.sg

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