

PATIENT INFORMATION ON ADENOIDECTOMY

What are adenoids?

Adenoids are located high in the throat in the area directly behind the nasal cavity. You cannot see the adenoids without the use of a mirror or an endoscope because they are above the soft palate. They are composed of the same type of tissue as the tonsils and have the same function in the immune system. Our bodies have other parts of the immune system with the same function so that the immune system is not affected if the tonsils and adenoids need to be removed.

Why do adenoids need to be removed?

Adenoids can cause problems if they are large enough to obstruct the airway behind the nose. Adenoids tend to grow to their largest size in childhood and then regress in adolescence. If a child has large adenoids then he/she may have chronic difficulty breathing through the nose and may habitually become a mouth-breather. Prolonged mouth-breathing can lead to abnormal facial growth and significant dental problems. Also, snoring and obstructive sleep apnea (pauses of breathing during sleep) are common in children with large adenoids. Removing the adenoids will often significantly improve nasal breathing and help relieve the snoring/sleep apnea.

Another way that adenoids can cause problems is recurrent infections. Like tonsils, the adenoids can actually harbor bacteria in the throat that then becomes a source of infections. They may have recurrent sinusitis, recurrent sore throats, or recurrent ear infections. Removing the adenoids will often significantly alleviate these recurrent infections.

What happens during adenoidectomy?

The surgery is performed under general anesthesia in the operating room. Your child must not eat or drink anything after midnight before the surgery. Once your child is asleep the surgeon will remove the adenoids using several instruments through the mouth. The procedure takes 10-20 minutes and is usually done as day surgery, meaning that your child will be able to go home on the same day as surgery.

The surgery is commonly performed and is generally considered to be a safe procedure. As with any treatment, there are some risks to consider. Bleeding from the surgical site may occur in about 2-3% of cases. This may necessitate a return to the operating room to control the bleeding. Rarely, there may be insufficient movement of the palate after surgery that results in inappropriate escape of air through the nose during speech. If this occurs it will usually go

away as the palate muscles become stronger. Sometimes speech therapy may be needed to help strengthen the muscles.

What to expect after adenoidectomy:

Diet – It is very important for kids to get plenty of fluids after surgery. You should encourage him/her to drink 2-3 ounces every waking hour for the first 2 days. Sometimes children will have some nausea after anesthesia but as soon as they are hungry, they may eat regular food. There are no restrictions on the type of food that they may eat so it is best to give them their favorite foods. Again, it is most important that they get plenty of fluids for the first few days after surgery.

Pain – It is normal for your child to have a sore throat, runny nose, and possibly fever for several days after surgery. They may also have neck pain or an earache. Consequently, they may be irritable and need to rest. Usually, Tylenol is sufficient for the pain. Motrin may also be used with Tylenol in an alternating fashion.

Bad Breath – This is normal after surgery because there is a scab at the surgical site as it heals. The bad breath will eventually go away but it can take several weeks. Saline nasal spray may help with the bad breath.

Recovery – Children will usually feel back to normal in 3-5 days. Most children will be able to return to school in this time frame. They should avoid strenuous activity such as swimming or sports for 2 weeks.

When to call your ear, nose, and throat doctor:

- **Bleeding** – a small amount of blood-tinged mucus is common after surgery. However, if your child has a significant nose bleed that does not stop after a few minutes then call your doctor immediately and plan on taking your child to the emergency department to be checked.
- **Fever** – a low-grade fever (<102 deg F) is common after surgery. If your child has a persistent fever above 102 deg F then notify your doctor.
- **Pain** – It is unusual for children to have severe pain after surgery. If your child has severe neck pain or stiffness, then call your doctor.

Emergencies will be treated at Las Colinas Medical Center (Southeast corner of MacArthur and Highway 161)