



# Tonsillectomy: aftercare advice (adult patients)

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## Information for patients from Day Surgery

### When you get home and for the first few days after your surgery

- Arrange for someone to collect you from hospital and look after you for the first 24 hours.
- You must rest for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.
- **If you have had a general anaesthetic**, avoid drinking alcohol, smoking, or taking sleeping tablets for 24 hours after your operation.
- **If you have had a general anaesthetic**, do not drive, cook, or operate any machinery for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.

### Will I need stitches?

Stitches are not always used for this operation. If used, they will be dissolvable and disappear on their own within two to three weeks of surgery.

### How long will I have to stay in hospital after my operation?

You will stay in hospital for 3 to 6 hours following your surgery.

### When can I start eating and drinking again?

- You will start eating and drinking as soon as you are awake after your surgery.
- Avoid hot drinks on the day of your surgery.
- Eat a normal diet, including rough, chewy foods such as crisps and toast. This will make sure your wound area stays clean while you heal. It may also reduce pain and the risk of infection.

## How will my pain be managed?

If you are sent home with painkillers, please follow the instructions below.

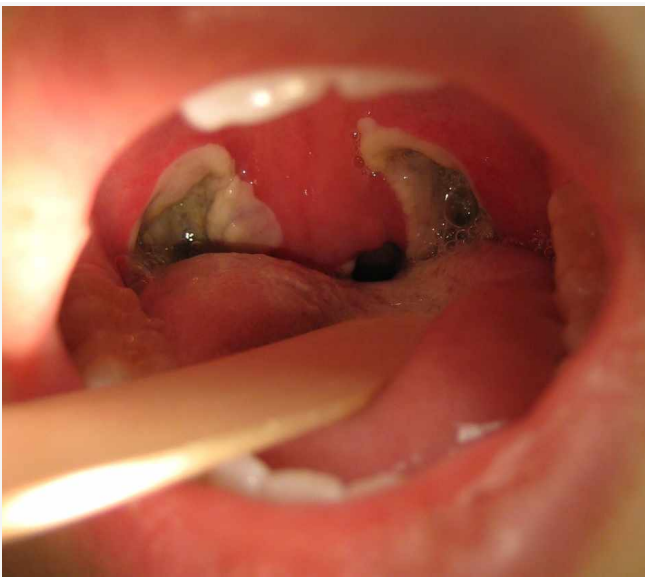
- Take your calculated dose of:
  - **paracetamol** four times a day, and
  - **ibuprofen** three times a day for seven days.

After that, take as needed for a further week.

- You may be given a mouthwash or spray to reduce your pain as well.
- Take soluble painkilling tablets about half an hour before meals, as swallowing will be painful.

## What should I expect following my surgery?

- You can expect to feel **pain** following your surgery, which may get worse in the first five days. This pain usually goes away within 10 days. Do not skip a dose of painkillers for the first seven days, as not eating and drinking due to pain can affect how you heal. It may also lead to bleeding or infection.
- You may also notice the area where your tonsils used to be appears white like a **wet scab**. This is usual after surgery and a normal part of healing. This may cause you to have **bad breath**.



Normal appearance after surgery. Source: James Heilman, MD, CC BY-SA 3.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0> via Wikimedia Commons



Swollen uvula is expected. Source: Bonesy, CC BY-SA 3.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0> via Wikimedia Commons

## When can I resume my normal activities?

You should stay off work and not exercise for two weeks. You must make sure you move around gently during this time.

### When should I come back to the hospital?

Bleeding within two weeks of surgery is one of the most common complications following tonsillectomy.

- If you start bleeding, lean forward to allow the blood from your mouth to drain out. Do not swallow the blood as it can make you feel sick.
- If there is more than a teaspoon of fresh blood, go back to the hospital immediately to be checked. Stop eating or drinking in case you need an operation when you arrive at the hospital.

### What should I do if I have any concerns or questions?

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact Rotary Outpatients or Day Surgery on the numbers below, or phone your GP.

- Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury  
Telephone: 01227 783114 (7:30am to 8pm)  
Telephone: 07887 687645 (8pm to 7:30am)
- Day Surgery Unit, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 234499 (7:30am to 8pm)  
Telephone: 07887 651162 (8pm to 7:30am)
- Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 616263 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- **Rotary Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Outpatients**, William Harvey Hospital, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 616261 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am to 3pm)

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

**Please let us know:**

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

**You can let us know this by:**

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments**, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)).

**Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient information leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

Reference number: Web 553

First published:  
July 2021

Last reviewed:  
July 2024

Next review date:  
November 2027

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