

**Colorado Mountain Medical**  
**Ear Nose and Throat**  
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**ADULT TONSILLECTOMY POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS**

**Recovery:** The recovery period for a tonsillectomy for an adult is at least 2 weeks. The day of surgery may not be too bad, but, by the 1st or 2nd post op day, the worst of the pain will usually set in. You may also note an increase in pain as the surgical sites are healing, around day 6 or 7.

**Medications:** You will be given a prescription for Percocet. This is a strong pain reliever for adults. I recommend beginning the pain medicine the day of surgery. You will generally be given your first dose in the recovery room of the surgery center. It is better to stay ahead of the pain, rather than fall behind and have to catch up. For the first few days after surgery, it is best to take the pain medicine regularly, every 4 to 6 hours. I do not recommend waking up to take pain medicine, but you may take it at night if you wake up and the pain is severe. Please call the office during office hours if a refill on the pain medicine is needed. If the pain medication upsets the stomach or you are vomiting, hold off temporarily and call the office. Tylenol or Ibuprofen may be taken if the Percocet is too strong or upsets the stomach.

**Activities:** Avoid any strenuous physical activity for a full 2 weeks. This includes bending at the waist or lifting heavier than about 20 pounds.

**Diet:** I recommend liquids and soft foods for about 2 weeks after surgery. You will generally prefer cooler liquids and foods. Avoid acidic liquids such as orange or tomato juice, and avoid foods that scratch on the way down such as chips or toast. Ice cream and other milk products will thicken the saliva, so yogurt and sherbets are better. It is very important that you remain well hydrated, and you should therefore at the least drink plenty of fluids. If you cannot keep fluids down, call the office to be admitted to the hospital for intravenous fluids.

**Unusual Occurrences:** It is common to experience ear pain in addition to a sore throat. This is called "referred pain" and should be controllable with the pain medicine. It is also fairly common to have a low grade fever (99-101) in the week following surgery. If the fever is > 102, call the office immediately.

**Bleeding from the area of the tonsils is my main concern post operatively.** It is rare, but it occurs in about 2% of patients, and it can be severe. Bleeding is most common within the first 48 hour after surgery or in 7 to 9 days when the scabs fall off. When you spit or sneeze, it is normal for there to be small amounts of old blood in the mucous or saliva. When true bleeding occurs you will either throw up a large amount of old blood (this looks like either dark red blood or coffee grounds) or you will see bright red blood dripping from the nose or mouth. If this occurs, immediately suck on an ice cube, as the cold may constrict the blood vessel and stop the bleeding. If the bleeding persists for longer than 5 minutes, call my office immediately.