

Adeno-tonsillectomy

Before the operation

What are tonsils and adenoids?

Tonsils are small glands in the throat, one on each side. The adenoids are also small glands but they are at the back of the nose. They are both there to help fight germs.

Does your child need them?

Your child's body can still fight germs without the adenoids and tonsils. They are only removed if they are doing more harm than good.

Why take them out?

Tonsils need to be removed if your child is getting a lot of sore throats caused by tonsillitis making them lose time from school.

Sometimes children have adenoids and tonsils so big that they cause problems with breathing at night when they are sleeping.

Children may have adenoids so large that they have a blocked nose, and they have to breathe through their mouths causing them to snore at night.

The adenoids can also cause ear problems by blocking the tube which joins the nose and the ear.

Are there any alternatives to adeno-tonsillectomy?

Tonsils do not always have to come out. Children sometimes grow out of the problems over a year or so. The adenoids get smaller as you grow, so that the nose and ear problems tend to get better with time. Surgery will make these problems get better more quickly, but it has a small risk.

How is the operation done?

Your child will be asleep under a general anaesthetic. The adenoids and tonsils are taken out through the mouth. The operation takes about twenty to thirty minutes but your child will be in the operating department for about an hour until they are properly awake.

How long will my child be in hospital?

Usually your child will be admitted to hospital on the day of the surgery and you will go home the next day, if your child is eating and drinking enough and feels well.

What can I expect after the operation?

Children usually cope very well with this operation and are able to resume normal activities soon after.

Sore throat: Your child will have a sore throat for around a week but it gets better day by day. We advise that you give your child regular painkillers half an hour before meals and before bed at **least** for the first 5-7 days. Pain can get worse between days 3 and 5 but this is normal before it gradually gets better. Painkillers are very important as it is essential that your child **eats normally** after the operation to help the throat to heal.

Sore ears: It is normal for your child to complain of sore ears after having their tonsils and adenoids removed. It happens because the throat and ears have the same nerves. It does not mean that your child has an ear infection.

The throat will look white or yellow: This is normal while the throat heals.

How long should my child be off school?

10-14 days is recommended to prevent infection.

Can there be problems?

Tonsil and adenoid surgery is very safe, but every operation has a small risk.

The most serious problem is bleeding. Bleeding may need a second operation to stop it. It does not happen often – about one child in a hundred.

Bleeding can be serious.

If your child has any bleeding from the throat you **must** see a doctor. Either call your GP, the ward or go to your nearest casualty department.

Some children may be sick after the operation. This usually settles quickly.

If you have any problems or questions please ask your surgeon.

Royal Hospital for Children and Young People
50 Little France Crescent
Edinburgh EH16 4TJ
Tel: **0131 536 1000**

Adeno-tonsillectomy
Before the operation