Care After Your Child’s Adenoid Surgery

What are adenoids?
The adenoids are pads of tissue in the throat, behind the back of the nose. They cannot be seen by looking in the mouth. Adenoids can be enlarged and block the eustachian tube or the nasal airway. Bacteria (germs) also can build up in the adenoids.

Reasons for adenoidectomy (removal of the adenoids)
• **Blocked nasal airway.** This can lead to mouth breathing and snoring. Removing the adenoids restores the airway and allows the child to breathe through the nose properly.

• **Chronic otitis media (middle ear infections).** Enlarged adenoids can block the eustachian tube, which connects the middle ear to the throat. They also can allow bacteria to enter the eustachian tube and lead to ear infections. Research shows that removing the adenoids, in addition to ear vents, may work well in treating chronic otitis media.

Before surgery
• Do not give your child aspirin, ibuprofen or Pepto Bismol for 10 days before surgery and up to 2 weeks after your surgery.
• Your child may take acetaminophen (Tylenol).
• Please tell your doctor if there is a family history of bleeding tendencies or if your child tends to bruise easily.

The surgery
Adenoidectomy is done as an outpatient procedure under general anesthesia. The surgery takes about 20 minutes. Your child will stay at the hospital for 1 to 2 hours after surgery.

After surgery
• Most children are back to normal within 24 hours of surgery. Some take a few days to recover.
• Increased snoring or nasal congestion is normal and is caused by the swelling in the back of the nose. This can last up to 3 weeks after surgery.
• Bad breath is normal and is caused by the scabs that form after surgery. It also can last up to 3 weeks after surgery.

Bleeding
You may notice a small amount of blood from the nostrils or throat during the next 24 hours. A small amount of blood also may be seen a week after surgery.

Call your doctor or go to the emergency department if:
• Bleeding becomes severe, lasting 30 minutes or more
• Your child swallows enough blood to vomit bright red blood (more than 4 tablespoons)

Pain
Throat pain, ear pain and headache are common for several days. Follow the recommended acetaminophen dose based on your child’s weight. Do not exceed the recommended acetaminophen dose in a 24 hour period. Do not use aspirin or products containing aspirin or ibuprofen because they can promote bleeding.

Eating ice chips or placing an ice pack on the neck may relieve some pain. If your child complains of a stiff neck, have the child do neck range-of-motion exercises and place a warm compress to the back of the neck for comfort.
Fever
It is normal for your child to run a low-grade fever from 99° F to 101° F for the first few days after surgery. Fever is made worse by not drinking enough. If the fever does not go down after acetaminophen (Tylenol) or is higher than 101.5° F, call your doctor.

Diet
- Liquids are very important. Make an effort to offer fluids often when your child is awake, especially during the first 2 days after surgery.
- Your child may eat whatever is desired without worrying about damaging the throat. A diet high in protein will help shorten recovery time and decrease pain. Try to offer foods such as eggs, soups made with beans, peas or meat. You can also use Ensure, PediaSure or a powdered protein drink for extra protein (some people add this to a milk shake for taste).
- A vitamin supplement, especially one containing vitamin C, helps tissues heal.

Activity
- Resting at home is best for the first 48 hours after surgery. Activity may be increased slowly after this time.
- Avoid vigorous physical activity, swimming or organized sports for 2 weeks after surgery, or as your doctor suggests.

School
Your child may return to school when feeling up to it. He or she should be eating and drinking well before returning to school.

Follow-up care
Your child may need to be seen following surgery, depending on your doctor’s preference. Call the office to schedule an appointment.

If there are problems or questions at any time, please call the office.