

Homecare after tonsillectomy

About the procedure

The procedure is usually performed under general anaesthesia and takes about 30 minutes. During the procedure, the tonsils are removed from the sides of the pharynx. Discharge is possible 6 hours after the operation at the earliest.

Pain management

There will be severe pain in the throat for at least a week, often for almost 2 weeks. The pain may also radiate to the ears, and there may be a slight elevation of temperature during the first few days. Painkillers should be taken regularly for at least a week to enable eating and drinking. The pain medication should be taken about 30 minutes before meals. Pain medication prescribed by the doctor or painkillers available from the pharmacy without a prescription may be used. The medication will make it easier to swallow but will not take away all pain.

Eating

Hot and coarse foods must be avoided for two weeks because of the risk of bleeding. Foods such as ice cream, yoghurt, milkshakes, creamed soup and soft casseroles that have been allowed to cool are suitable. A sufficient intake of fluids prevents fever and soothes the pain. For adults, about 2–2.5 litres a day is sufficient. Children should drink about 1–1.5 litres a day. The diet restrictions of the operated child should be taken into consideration at school.

Post-operative bleeding

After the procedure, grey coating will develop in the pharynx. The coating comes off by itself about 7–10 days after the procedure. At this point, there may be some bleeding from the pharynx. The bleeding may also be heavier, in which case treatment in hospital may be required. The bleeding may be reduced by sucking on ice cubes and by applying a cold pack to the neck. The blood collecting in the mouth should be spat out, not swallowed, as it causes nausea. Activities that raise the blood pressure, such as physical exertion, sauna baths and sun exposure, should be avoided for two weeks to prevent postoperative bleeding. Smoking slows down healing as well.

Sick leave

The duration of sick leave is two weeks. Going back to school and day care is allowed one week after the procedure. However, the child must be exempted from physical education and recreational sports for two weeks.

One of the parents of a child under 7 years is entitled to reimbursement from KELA (D certificate) on the day of the procedure. However, no sick leave certificate is provided for other days when the child is cared for at home.

Contact the hospital in the event of

- severe pain which is not alleviated with painkillers
- a fever over 38°C
- heavy bleeding
- shortness of breath

Contact information

Ear, Nose and Throat Outpatient Clinic
Monday to Friday, 8 am–3 pm
Tel. 050 473 5086

Day Surgery Unit
Monday to Friday, 8 am–3 pm
Tel. 02 627 3840

Short Stay Unit
Tel. 02 627 7512