



Dr. *Francis T. Hall*

EAR, NOSE, THROAT, HEAD & NECK

Tonsillectomy / adenotonsillectomy care

Tonsillectomy is the name of the operation when the tonsils are removed, while adenotonsillectomy refers to removal of both the tonsils and the adenoids. The tonsils lie on either side of the throat.

The adenoids are like the tonsils but lie above the soft palate and behind the nose. You can't see the adenoids by simply looking in your mouth. As we grow older the adenoids usually shrink away to nothing, although sometimes the adenoids persist.

The tonsils are usually removed for two common reasons:

- Recurrent tonsillitis
- Obstructive symptoms: snoring, obstructive sleep apnoea, difficulty breathing easily through your nose.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to feel better as quickly as possible.

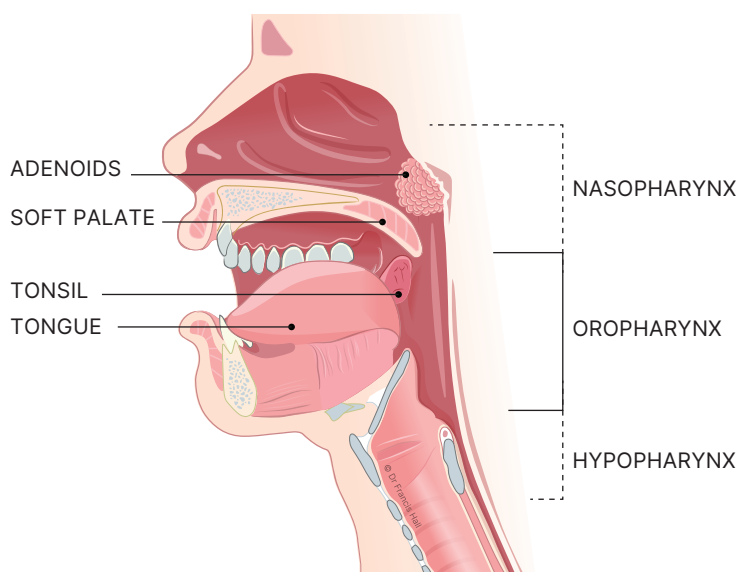
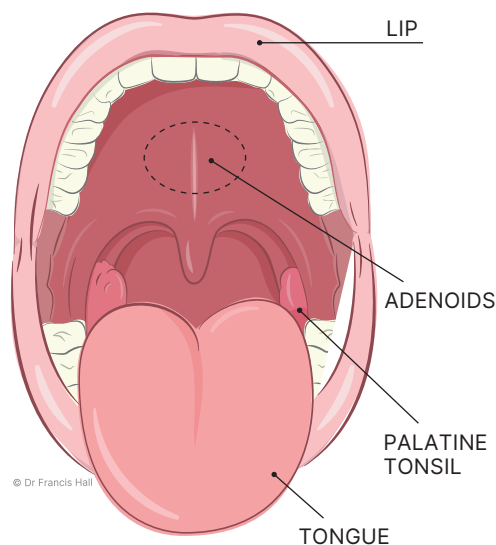
What to expect?

You can expect to have a sore throat for about ten days. Often the throat gets more sore about 6 days after the surgery. Often your ears hurt too. Ear pain is due to referred pain from the throat. There is nothing wrong with the ears, the brain just gets a little confused as to where the pain is coming from as the throat and the ear share the same nerve. Usually the throat is more sore in the morning, when the throat is dry and you haven't taken your pain medication.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Activity:

- Do not drive in the 24 hours following your surgery.
- Rest when you feel tired. Getting enough sleep will help you recover.
- Try to walk each day. Start by walking a little more than you did the day before. Bit by bit, increase the amount you walk.
- You will need to take 2 weeks off school or work.
- In order to reduce the chance of bleeding, avoid strenuous activities, such as bicycle riding, jogging, weight lifting, or aerobic exercise, for 2 to 3 weeks or until Dr Hall says it is okay.
- Do not swim for two weeks.
- Do not fly, go boating or go anywhere remote for 18 days following surgery. If you bleed when you are away from access to medical care you are placing your life at risk.



- What should I eat after my tonsils are removed?
- Because the throat is sore, it hurts to swallow. Usually, soft food is less painful to swallow. Traditionally the recommendation was for jelly and ice cream. However, people eat all sorts of things after having their tonsils removed, including hamburgers, chips, pizza and curry. Eat whatever you feel comfortable eating.
- Although it may hurt to swallow, eating helps keep the pain at manageable levels.
- It is important to drink plenty of fluids-water, milk, juice, whatever.. Aim for about two litres of fluid per day. That way you will stay well hydrated and this helps a lot with any pain.

Pain medicines:

- Dr Hall or his anaesthetist will prescribe several different medicines for the pain, from the following list: paracetamol (Panadol), ibuprofen (Brufen), celecoxib (Celebrex), Etoricoxib (Arcoxia), codeine, tramadol, gabapentin and Difflam spray. Please take the medications as instructed. Some of the medications are taken regularly and some are taken for break through pain. Please text or call Dr Hall if the pain becomes too much. He can make changes to your medications that can make a big difference to your level of comfort.
- If Dr Hall prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.
- If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach:
 - Take your medicine after meals (unless Dr Hall has told you not to).
 - Ask Dr Hall for a different pain medicine.
- My throat looks white and horrible, is it infected?
- After a few days you may notice that there is pale grey stuff where your tonsils used to be. This is the throat's equivalent to a scab on your knee. It is normal and nothing to be alarmed about.

Bad breath:

- It is not unusual to notice bad breath or an unusual smell or taste in the mouth for 1-2 weeks after your surgery.

Problems:

- Bleeding. If you bleed from either your mouth or nose, go to the emergency department. It is preferable to go to the emergency department at Auckland Hospital as they have an ENT registrar on site to deal with emergencies. Please note, neither Middlemore Hospital nor Northshore Hospital have an ENT emergency service. Call Dr Hall on 021 733 677 as you are being driven into the hospital.
- Not many patients bleed, only about 2% but for that 2% it can be quite dramatic and frightening.
- Change in voice is uncommon following tonsillectomy and when it does occur it is usually temporary.
- Likewise a change in taste is uncommon and usually temporary although on rare occasions it may be permanent.

Follow up appointment:

- Dr Hall usually sees his tonsillectomy patients about 6 weeks after surgery. His secretary Rebecca will arrange your follow up appointment for you. If you have not heard from Rebecca within two weeks of your surgery, please contact her on 09 281 2963.

Any problems call or text Dr Francis Hall on 021 733 677

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