

Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) - Tonsillectomy

Introduction

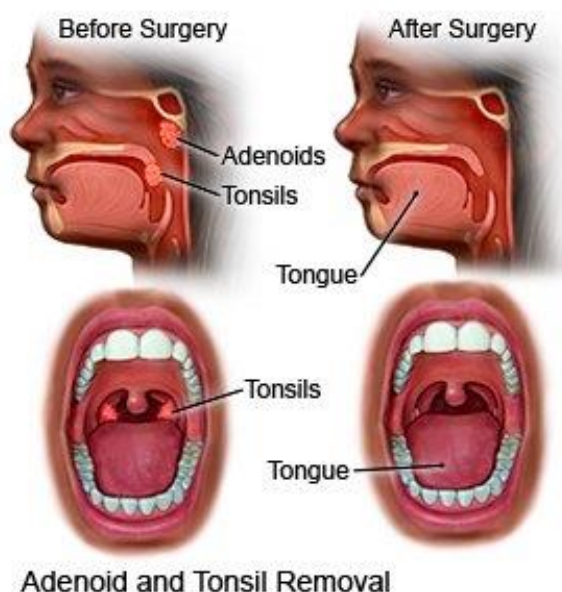
The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

What is a tonsillectomy?

A tonsillectomy is the surgical removal of the tonsils. The tonsils are two small almond-shaped mounds of lymphatic tissue that sit on either side of the back of the throat. They are part of your body's system to fight infection and are only important during the first few years of life.

This surgery is normally performed as a day case, which means you will come into hospital for the procedure and leave on the same day. It is performed under a general anaesthetic, which means you will be asleep for the entire operation.

Otolaryngologists (commonly referred to as ENT surgeons) deal with the diagnosis, evaluation, and management of diseases of head and neck and principally the ears, nose, and throat. Your consultant will discuss with you at your outpatient appointment if you require a tonsillectomy.



Why do I need a tonsillectomy?

A tonsillectomy is usually suggested if you have:

- recurrent episodes of tonsillitis or quinsy – an infection of the tonsils which can cause a severe sore throat
- high temperature and difficulty swallowing
- swollen tonsils that cause you to snore or hold your breath at night
- swollen tonsils that make it harder to breathe or swallow
- sore throats that often interrupt your work or everyday life

What are the benefits?

- Your general health may improve – removing your tonsils will prevent further episodes of tonsillitis
- You may still get sore throats, but this should not occur as often.

Are there any alternative treatments?

- You may choose not to have your tonsils removed. Episodes of tonsillitis can be treated with antibiotics and pain relief.
- If you do not have swollen tonsils removed, you could develop other problems. Although rare, potential problems include:
 - an abscess forming
 - rheumatic fever
 - a very high fever or breathing difficulties.

Please speak to your doctor for more information.

What are the risks of having a tonsillectomy?

There are risks associated with any surgery. Your doctor (General Practitioner-GP) will explain these risks to you. Please ask questions if you are uncertain.

Possible problems from this surgery include:

- a **sore throat** for about 10 to 14 days after the operation, which includes difficulty swallowing
- **bleeding**. This can happen up to two weeks after the operation.
- an **infection**
- **damaged teeth** (please let us know if you have any loose, capped, or crowned teeth)
- **complications from the general anaesthetic**. The anaesthetist will explain these risks to you in more detail.

What happens before the surgery?

We will give you an appointment to attend a pre-assessment clinic before your surgery. The pre-operative assessment nurse will check your general health and may carry out some tests.

These are to make sure that you are fit enough to have the anaesthetic and surgery. The nurse will also explain how you need to prepare for your surgery. It is important that you follow the instructions given to you by your doctor or nurse.

What happens during the operation?

- The operation is performed through the mouth, meaning there will be no external (outside) cuts or scars. It generally takes about 30 to 45 minutes.
- After the surgery, you will be taken to a recovery room, where you will come round from the general anaesthetic.

Health and Wellbeing Guidance for Patients

For any adults waiting for their procedure, it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle and be as medically fit as possible. If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure you should get this reviewed at your doctor's surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come for your pre-operative assessment.

- Information on a range of **ENT** conditions including **Tonsillitis** can be found on the following websites:
 - **Tonsillitis - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** – provides general information and outlines a range of available treatment options

General **health and wellbeing information** to support our local residents to stop smoking or with weight management **Healthy Surrey** has been commissioned to provide free stop smoking and weight management support our community.

- **National Stop Smoking and weight management support is also available via**
 - **Quit smoking - Better Health - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** The NHS stop smoking service provides a range of options to help you quit including support from an advisor, stop smoking medications, e-cigarettes, and a digital offer for those who wish to quit by themselves. If you are not ready to quit smoking but would like more information on how to protect your family, **Smoke free Homes**, advises on how to make your home and car smoke free.
 - **Live Well - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** are here to help you and offer different levels of support to maintain a healthy weight and to stop smoking, alcohol support and eating well etc.

- **Healthy eating and being active**

Information and advice on healthy eating and becoming more active is available from:

- **Eat well - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** (website) - includes easy to prepare meals for healthy meals and the **NHS Food Scanner app - Healthier Families - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** to help reduce levels of sugar in your diet.
- **Weight Management Service** The service supports adults aged 18 years or over who want to lose weight and have been identified as obese.
- **Lose weight - Better Health - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** (website) - includes tips on getting active for all, including the downloadable active apps, as well as tailored advice for those living with a long-term condition.

- **Find out your BMI**

You can get help to lead a healthier lifestyle if you're an adult (18 years or over) and your body mass index (BMI) is above average. Use this tool to **BMI calculator | Check your BMI - NHS | Please fill in your details (www.nhs.uk)** if it's too high, sign up for a programme that will help you lose weight BMI of 30+

- **BMI of 28+**

You can get support from the 'Live Well' website, if your BMI is 28 or over if at least one of the following applies:

- you have Type 1 and 2 Diabetes or Metabolic Syndrome
- you have problems with your heart, circulation, hypertension, or high blood pressure
- you have been diagnosed with anxiety/depression
- you need to lose weight before receiving another medical treatment or surgery
- you have a serious long-term health condition that is adversely affected by your weight such as muscular skeletal disorders (back pain, mobility issues) and asthma
- you're from a black or ethnic minority background.

- **BMI of 25+**

If you have a Body Mass Index of 25 or higher **Eat well - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** provides online support to help you lose weight and includes access to the NHS 12-week weight loss plan.

The NHS 12-week fitness plan will support your weight loss plan as well as improve your health. This is aimed at beginners and will help get you into the habit of regular exercise over the course of the programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you are experiencing any worsening signs or symptoms of your tonsillitis condition, you should first consult your General Practitioner (GP).

a. Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

b. Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

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| Call: Ashford & St Peter's NHS Trust Ashford Hospital : ☎ 01784 884 402 St Peter's Hospital: ☎ 01932 722 686 | Email: asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net For My Planned Care enquiries | Trust Website: Home (ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk) |
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