

# ENT

## Adenoidectomy

### What are adenoids?

Adenoids are small lumps of tissue at the back of the nose, above the roof of the mouth. You cannot see a person's adenoids by looking in their mouth.

Adenoids are part of the immune system, which helps fight infection and protects the body from bacteria and viruses.

Adenoids are bigger when you are a child. They then start to shrink, and usually disappear by the time you are an adult.

### When adenoids need to be removed

A child's adenoids can sometimes become swollen or enlarged. This can happen after a bacterial or viral infection, or after a substance triggers an allergic reaction.

In most cases, swollen adenoids only cause mild discomfort and treatment is not needed. However, for some children, it can cause severe discomfort and interfere with their daily life.

Adenoids may need to be removed if your child has:

breathing problems – your child may have difficulty breathing through their nose and may have to breathe through their mouth instead, which can cause problems such as cracked lips and a dry mouth

difficulty sleeping – your child may start to snore and in severe cases, some children have irregular breathing during sleep and become very sleepy during the day (sleep apnoea)

recurrent or persistent problems with the ears, such as middle ear infections (otitis media) or glue ear (where the middle ear becomes filled with fluid)



recurrent or persistent sinusitis leading to symptoms such as a constantly runny nose, facial pain and nasal-sounding speech

Adults do not often need an adenoidectomy. Their adenoids have usually shrunk so they are not likely to cause problems.

### Guidance for Patients

The operation is usually done by an ear, nose and throat (ENT) surgeon and takes around 30 minutes. Afterwards, your child will need to stay in the recovery ward for up to an hour until the anaesthetic has worn off.

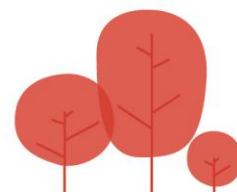
Adenoidectomies are sometimes day cases if they're done in the morning, in which case your child may be able to go home on the same day. However, if the procedure is done in the afternoon, your child may need to stay in hospital overnight.

An adenoidectomy is done under general anaesthetic, so your child will be asleep during the operation and will not feel any pain. The adenoids are removed through the mouth. Heat is sometimes used to stop any bleeding.

If your child has large tonsils, or has had severe or frequent bouts of tonsillitis, the doctor may suggest removing the tonsils and adenoids at the same time. This is called an adenotonsillectomy. Removing the adenoids and tonsils at the same time reduces the chance of complications. However, adenoidectomies, tonsillectomies and adenotonsillectomies are quick and straightforward procedures with few complications.

While you are waiting, you can use any extra time in a positive way to help your child to be healthier before their surgery. This can reduce the risk of complications, support their recovery and benefit their long-term health. Here are the ways that your child and whole family can be put yourself in the best place to have your surgery.

- Eating more healthily – A healthy diet is important to a child's development, and even more important prior to surgery. Preventing iron deficiency can reduce the risk of requiring a blood transfusion and improve recovery after surgery. Iron rich diets are the best way to achieve this, although sometimes iron supplements are necessary to top up iron levels.
- Getting control of asthma – Asthma is common in childhood and if poorly controlled can cause problems during the anaesthetic. An assessment of the level of control can be made using the Asthma Control Test ([www.asthmacontroltest.com](http://www.asthmacontroltest.com)). If support or improvements are required please seek advice from your GP or practice asthma nurse.



- Creating a smoke-free home – Children who are exposed to environmental tobacco smoke are twice as likely to suffer airway or breathing problems during or after the operation. If you, or a family member, would like support stopping smoking visit the NHS website for advice and support.
- Getting the right vaccinations – It's important that children and adults have vaccinations at the right time for the best protection. If you or your child have missed a vaccine, contact your GP to catch up.
- Moving more – National guidelines for physical activity recommend 180 minutes per day for pre-schoolers and 60 minutes per day for school-age children.
- Having a health check – If your child is over 14 years of age and has a learning disability, they can have a free annual health check at your GP surgery.

### Health and wellbeing if you have to wait

If, for any reason, your child's condition gets worse or you are worried about one of the below please see your GP, call 111 or seek urgent medical attention.

- High temperature
- Not eating
- Not drinking
- Persistent vomiting
- Increased Pain

### Contact us

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