Before your child has tonsil surgery

Your child has been booked in to have surgery to remove their tonsils. This is called a tonsillectomy. The information below will help you and your child prepare for surgery, and help them recover afterwards.

Important information

Before you come to hospital

Ask your surgeon before giving any medications, herbal supplements or vitamins for **two weeks** before surgery.

Have paracetamol (this can have other names such as Panadol) at home that is the right strength for your child’s age and weight.

Make sure you have something to measure the right amount of paracetamol and a way to give it to your child.

At home

Care for your child at home for **two weeks** after surgery.

Your child is likely to need regular medication for one to two weeks.

They can eat and drink what they usually do. It might be handy to have some icy poles or ice cream at home, as some children find cool drinks or food soothing.



## Before coming to hospital

Most children having tonsillectomy **stay overnight**. Some children can go home on the same day.

Your child’s surgeon will discuss with you how long your child is likely to stay in hospital and what to expect.

Help your child to understand what to expect before they come to hospital.

Some medications, herbal supplements or vitamins may increase the risk of bleeding. Talk to your doctor if you plan to give any of these in the two weeks before surgery.

**If your child becomes unwell,** please call our
pre-admission staff on <phone number>. Your child’s surgery may need to be delayed.

Make sure you have paracetamol (this can have other names such as Panadol) at home that is the right strength for your child’s age and weight. You will also need something to help you measure and give the right amount such as a cup or medicine syringe. Your local pharmacist can advise you of the types of paracetamol available such as chewable tablets or syrup.

Watch our videos

You can hear from other parents about their experiences caring for their child after tonsil surgery at home at: [www.bettersafercare.vic.gov.au/resources/tools/making-a-decision-about-tonsillectomy](http://www.bettersafercare.vic.gov.au/resources/tools/making-a-decision-about-tonsillectomy)



## On the day of surgery

### Before surgery

You will meet your child’s anaesthetist, surgeon and nurses. Ask them any questions you may have.

Before surgery, your child won’t be able to eat and drink as they usually would. Your doctors and nurses will let you know when and for how long.

### After surgery

Most children need to be closely monitored when they are sleeping, as they may have some snoring or breathing difficulties.

Your child will be given regular medications to help keep them comfortable. Let the staff know what will help your child to take their medications.

### Getting ready to go home

Your nurses or doctors will check whether your child is eating and drinking well, is comfortable and whether there is any bleeding in the throat or any difficulties breathing.

Your doctors, nurses or pharmacist will discuss with you what medication to give your child at home.

Let your nurses or doctors know if you are not sure of anything.



## At home

**Your child should stay at home for two weeks after the operation and avoid sport or vigorous physical activity.**

Medication to help with pain is usually needed four times a day for **one to two weeks** after surgery, especially before meals and on **day four to five** when the pain is often worse.

It is important to make sure that your child is comfortable enough to be able to eat and drink well.

**Your child can eat any food that they like to eat.**

Cool drinks, icy poles and ice cream may be soothing if they are having difficulty swallowing.

It is normal for your child to have:

* a sore throat
* pain in the ears
* bad breath
* a runny nose
* voice change
* white patches in the throat.

Your surgeon will discuss with you who your child needs to see for a **medical follow up appointment** and when.

You may also get a phone call in the days after surgery to see how your child is recovering.

A small number of children have bleeding and need medical help in the two weeks after the operation. Your child’s surgeon will explain the risks of the surgery specific to your child.