

## POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS – Tonsillectomy

### DIET

- During the operation and often afterwards you will have fluid running directly into your veins keeping you hydrated. This will continue until you are drinking sufficiently and there is no vomiting. When you are fully awake you can start eating and drinking. We encourage you to eat a normal diet but often it is easier to eat softer foods. It is OK if you do not want to eat any solid food as long as you keep up your fluids.
- Fluids include water, juices, rehydration fluids like Hydralyte, Sports drinks like Powerade or Gatorade AS WELL AS jelly, milkshakes, yoghurt, custard, soups, ice-cream etc
- REMEMBER it is better to have small sips (25mls) every few minutes than to try and force down large amounts.

### PAIN

- Varies significantly from person to person BUT Tonsillectomy *is* a painful procedure
- The pain is often referred to your ears (blocked, pressure or painful) or your teeth
- The pain may get worse in the first 2-4 days and often flares again around 7-10 days
- Keeping up your fluid intake and taking antibiotics reduces the flare up
- Pain is best managed by REGULAR painkillers
- If you let mild pain build up it will become severe and difficult to manage
  - Take pain medications regularly
    - I recommend a Cox II inhibitor like Meloxicam (Mobic) or Celecoxib (Celebrex) **daily**
    - **Plus** paracetamol with or without codeine **every 6 hours**
  - If you have pain *between* regular doses then you need to take
    - Oxycodone (Endone) tablets AND / OR Tramadol
  - DO NOT take anti-inflammatory medication such as Nurofen or Ibuprofen as these may **increase** the risk of bleeding BUT the new generation anti-inflammatories like Mobic and Celebrex are effective and safe.
- Sucking on ice blocks esp hydralyte (rehydration) ice blocks is very soothing
- Recent studies have shown there is benefit from honey – take a teaspoon (5mls) as you wake – obviously more is harmless and may be helpful.
- Acupressure point P6 (two fingers from the wrist between the tendons) can reduce nausea

### ACTIVITY

- It is recommended that you rest for 7 – 10 days after a tonsillectomy and start gentle activity in the second week. You should avoid any vigorous activity during this period.

### HYGIENE

- You should continue brushing your teeth morning and night and have regular baths / showers.

### RECOVERY

- You may experience ear pain, swallowing difficulty and even toothache. This is usually due to referred pain along shared nerve supply – take regular painkillers
- You may notice a bad breath – brush teeth twice a day
- There will be a yellow – green film over the tonsil bed, which is often mistaken for infection – keep drinking– this is part of the healing process. If their temperature >38.5 degrees Celsius contact Dr Kalish's rooms or your Local Doctor – antibiotics may be needed.
- Often you will be on your way to recovery only to have a slight relapse around day 7. This is usually due to the scabs coming away. Remember fluids and painkillers and take it easy.

## BLEEDING

- This is the biggest concern after surgery.
- 5% of patients will have some bleeding (small amounts of fresh blood or old clot) BUT 2% of patients can have a larger bleed and may need to have an operation to stop the bleeding. If there is more than one tablespoon of fresh blood report **immediately to the nearest emergency department - Call an ambulance if concerned.**

## OTHER SENSATIONS

- Some patients feel a tight / stretching or even tearing sensation when opening their mouth wide – this is due to the scar tissue forming and is normal
- Your voice will change! We are making more room in your throat, which will change the *resonance* of your voice – this may be slight in some or noticeable in others. Give it 3 months before making a judgement.
- Taste is often altered after the surgery. This may be from the medications, reflux, the slough around the back of the throat, compression of the tongue by the mouth gag or injury to the nerves of taste during the surgery. This almost always corrects itself. Again please give it at least 3 months before making a judgement.
- Swallowing will feel different, initially it will be sore to swallow but the whole sensation is slightly altered. Again almost everyone gets used to this.
- Velopharyngeal Insufficiency (VPI) – this occurs when food or liquid comes out of your nose when eating due to an insufficient palate. This may occur shortly after surgery as your palate is stiff and sore and may not be working as well as it can but it is very rare for this to persist.

## ANTIBIOTICS

- I do not routinely give antibiotics after tonsillectomy.
- I do recommend the use of probiotics – eat yoghurts or consider supplements like Inner Health Plus.

## FOLLOW UP

- Follow up arrangement will be made at the time of your discharge
- It is usually 4-6 weeks after the surgery in the rooms.
- Please ring the rooms to book the post operative appointment 9362 5991

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to help improve your current condition. Surgery often represents one of the most effective ways we can intervene and assist in managing your problem. Unfortunately it is also the most invasive and often requires a significant recuperation time. It is always important to remember why you are having the surgery and what are the long-term benefits.

Every person responds differently to surgery and every outcome will differ slightly as well.

**If you have ANY concerns please contact us through our rooms on 02 9362 5991. If it is an emergency please contact Concord Hospital on 02 9767 5000 and ask to be put through to Dr Kalish.** If I am not available you can speak to the ENT Registrar who will assist you with any emergencies and contact me as soon as possible.