

## After Your Tonsillectomy

### *Self-care and what to expect*

*This handout explains self-care and what to expect after having surgery to remove your tonsils.*

### **Diet**

- Every day as you recover, drink at least 8 glasses of cool fluids such as water, juice, or soda. Cool fluids help lessen swelling.
- You may eat soft foods such as ice cream, pudding, popsicles, and mashed potatoes as soon as you feel ready. You may not feel ready to start solid food for several days.
- For at least 1 week, avoid eating foods that are bulky or spicy, or have sharp edges.



*Drink at least 8 glasses of cool fluids every day.*

### **Medicines**

#### **Antibiotics**

Take all antibiotics exactly as prescribed. **If you get a rash or hives:**

- Stop taking the medicine.
- Call the clinic at 206.598.4022.

#### **Pain Medicine**

We will give you pain medicine to take by mouth. It is common to have a sore throat after surgery. This may last for 1 week or more.

For pain control:

- **For mild to moderate pain:** Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). Follow the dose instructions on the label. Alternate taking Tylenol and ibuprofen every 3 to 4 hours.
- **For severe pain:** Take the pain medicine (*opioids*) your doctor prescribed. Take only as prescribed.

## Swallowing and Talking

Swallowing and talking can be painful after surgery:

- Try to talk as little as you can.
- Save your swallowing for foods, liquids, and medicines.
- If you have too much saliva in your mouth, spit it out.

## Activity

- **For 1 week:** Keep your head elevated when resting or sleeping. Use a few pillows, or sleep in a recliner.
- **For 10 days:** Avoid doing any activity that makes you breathe hard, sweat, or strain.
- You may shower the day after surgery.
- It may feel like there is something in the back of your throat. This is normal. It will go away as the swelling lessens.
- Avoid coughing and clearing your throat.
- If your saliva has a few blood streaks in it, rinse your mouth with cold water and rest sitting up in a chair.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

### For questions about your care:

Call the Otolaryngology Clinic Head and Neck Voice Mail Line at 206.598.7535.

### For urgent issues:

Call the Otolaryngology Clinic at 206.598.4022. Ask the front desk staff to page the nurse.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.4022. Press 5 to talk with a nurse on the Community Care Line.

## When to Call

- If your saliva has **more than a few blood streaks** in it:
  - Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Call the clinic at 206.598.4022 and press 8 when you hear the recording. Ask to talk with the nurse.
  - After hours and on weekends and holidays: Call 206.598.4022. Press 5 to talk with a nurse on the Community Care Line.
- **If you have a lot of bleeding, call 911.**