

# 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

Check our guide for medications, herbal supplements or vitamins to stop **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 will need regular pain 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 and fizzy drinks such as lemonade at home, as some children find cool drinks or food soothing during recovery.



## BEFORE COMING TO HOSPITAL

Children having tonsillectomy might stay overnight or go home on the same day. Our surgeons will discuss this with you and what to expect.

Help your child to understand what to expect before they come to hospital. We have a social story about going to hospital on our website which is helpful to read through together. (insert link)

Some medications, herbal supplements or vitamins may increase the risk of bleeding. We have provided you with a list to avoid in the two weeks before surgery.

**If your child becomes unwell**, please call our clinic on 53334755. Your child's surgery may need to be rescheduled.

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: (put ent ballarat link here) [www.bettersafecare.vic.gov.au/resources/tools/making-a-decision-about-tonsillectomy](http://www.bettersafecare.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. We will give you some fasting guidelines and the hospital preadmission nurse will confirm this with you before your child's admission.

You must follow these guidelines for fasting.

### 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 pain medications to help keep them comfortable. Antibiotics are not routinely prescribed after tonsillectomy, however, in some cases your surgeon may prescribe antibiotics for your child.

### Getting ready to go home

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

Let your nurses or surgeon know if you are not sure of anything and ask what to expect when you go home.

The nursing staff will inform you of your child's post operative appointment with your surgeon.



## 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 **days four to ten** when the pain is often worse.

Pain medication is important. It helps to make sure that your child is comfortable enough to be able to eat and drink well. Eating and drinking will aid your child's recovery.

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

There is no magic formula in getting your child to eat and drink after surgery other than persistence and encouragement. Cool fizzy drinks, icy poles and ice cream may be soothing if they are having difficulty swallowing.

It is normal for your child to have:

- a painful sore throat
- pain in the ears
- bad breath
- a runny nose
- voice change
- white patches in the throat or coating on the tongue
- resistance to eating and drinking

A small number of children struggle to eat and drink and may have bleeding in the two weeks after surgery, requiring medical help. You should go the emergency department at Ballarat Health Services or the closest emergency department for assessment. Please call us 53334755 and advise us if your child goes to hospital.