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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS TONSILLECTOMY

GENERAL INFORMATION:

The tonsils (and adenoids) are lymphatic tissues which play a part in the body's defences against infection. There are other lymphatic tissues which do the same job and the body's defences do not seem to be decreased after their removal.

Recovery from tonsillectomy can vary from patient to patient but generally you will require two to three weeks' convalescence. Most people who have their tonsils removed keep much better health afterwards if there were good reasons for their removal.

You should anticipate needing to be away from work for a two week period.

AFTER SURGERY:

On return from hospital, bed rest is not necessary but you will need to stay fairly quiet for a day or two, preferably indoors. Lack of energy for up to two weeks after the operation is not uncommon.

Avoid very hot baths and showers and also avoid strenuous activity for two weeks as these can cause bleeding.

DISCOMFORT:

Pain in the throat is often a problem and for some patients, can be quite severe. Discomfort may continue for a couple of weeks. Some increase in discomfort may be noted on the 4th or 5th day as part of normal healing.

MEDICATIONS FOR PAIN RELIEF.

DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN before or after surgery as this may promote bleeding. If severe pain occurs, please feel free to contact me at the numbers printed below.

Panadol, Panadeine Forte or Neurofen can be taken half an hour before meals, or at other times when necessary according to directions, to assist with pain relief. Panadol can be purchased without a prescription.

Diffiam spray – two puffs of this can be used every one and a half hours – numbs the throat and is best taken before other medications or food. Other options are a Diffiam lozenge or a Diffiam gargle.

An antibiotic is often prescribed to reduce the risk of infection.

Chewing gum can be chewed regularly – this gets the muscles at the back of the throat working which reduces the amount of pain.

HEALING:

Healing occurs fairly rapidly. A yellow-white membrane is usually seen overlying the site of the tonsil removal. This is normal and does not mean infection is present.

FLUIDS AND MEALS:

It is important to drink plenty of fluids (lemonade, etc.) but **avoid hot drinks**.

For the first one to two weeks, soft, cool foods with low roughage should be given (e.g. custard, jelly, poached/scrambled eggs). Avoid acidic foods such as citrus fruit or tomatoes as these may cause pain. Fruit flavoured or plain lemonade ice blocks can also be very helpful. **Avoid very hot foods**.

If there is any discomfort noted with eating, Panadol may be given half an hour before meals to assist in relieving the pain. A normal diet may generally be resumed within two weeks.

BLEEDING :

A small amount of blood staining may be noted for the first couple of hours after surgery and you will be frequently checked by hospital staff. Bleeding after leaving hospital is UNCOMMON. Occasionally 7-10 days after the operation a small amount of blood in the sputum may be noticed. This could be due to a throat infection and should be checked promptly by me or your local doctor. If an infection is present, a suitable antibiotic will need to be commenced.

If bleeding is more than a spot or two, lie side with head on a pillow to allow blood to run out of the mouth. Any clots should be gently spat out. If it is not distressing, it is helpful to suck on an iceblock.

IF BLEEDING OCCURS, CONTACT DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY VIA the hospital or emergency number given prior to surgery.

RETURNING TO NORMAL ACTIVITY:

- Rest at home for one to three days is desirable. The remainder of the first week is for convalescence and quiet activities only should be allowed.
- Avoid exposure to cold.
- Work may generally be resumed a couple of weeks after surgery.

POST-OPERATIVE VISIT TO DR. LEWKOVITZ:

A post-operative appointment will be made by my secretary/receptionist at the time of booking the surgery date to ensure that the healing is progressing as expected and that there is no evidence of infection.

It is important to attend your post-operative follow up appointment.