

Appendix 2:

Parent / carer information resources

It is very important that children are given regular painkillers after having a tonsillectomy, so that they can recover comfortably and begin to eat and drink normally as soon as possible. Here are some commonly asked questions and answers:

Will my child experience a lot of pain?

It is common for children to have pain and feel uncomfortable for 10 to 14 days after tonsillectomy. Pain may increase each day after the operation, with the worst discomfort occurring about 3 to 5 days after the operation. They will experience discomfort on swallowing and may also notice some jaw pain and earache.

What should I do to treat the pain?

You will be given a package of painkillers to take home, and it is very important that you follow the instructions about doses from the hospital pharmacy.

Please give paracetamol and ibuprofen regularly, around the clock including during the night, for at least 7 days, to make sure that your child always has some painkiller working. Paracetamol and ibuprofen work well when given together, 4 times in 24 hours (every 4 to 6 hours), but it is also possible to stagger the doses to give the medicines separately. Some people find it useful to set a timer to remind them when the next dose is due.

What is Difflam (benzydamine)?

Difflam (benzydamine) is a throat spray that can be helpful to reduce discomfort on swallowing, and we may supply a bottle to take home. We suggest using it before meals and up to every 2 hours as required.

It is important to try to direct the spray onto the areas where the tonsils were removed, though this may be tricky in small children. If your child finds it helpful and you need a further bottle, you can buy it over-the-counter from the chemist.

What if my child is in severe pain?

You will be given a small quantity of oral morphine solution, which should be used if your child experiences severe pain after paracetamol and ibuprofen have already been given. It can be particularly helpful during days 3 to 5 after the operation.

Please follow the instructions on the additional morphine information you will be given by the pharmacy.

Do I need to change my child's diet at home?

Your child's appetite may take a few days to return, but it is important to encourage them to eat and drink regularly. It is best to eat a normal diet, including rough foods like toast, to help healing and reduce the risk of infection and bleeding.

Encourage your child to have a drink of water after eating to keep the healing area clean. Ice lollies can be soothing and older children may find chewing gum helpful for a sore throat.

What if my child feels sick or vomits?

It is common for children to feel sick on occasions while recovering from a tonsillectomy.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest, as sometimes lying down for a few hours can be enough to help. Encourage small sips of water or diluted squash, but not hot or fizzy drinks.

Avoid large gulps of water, as these can cause the stomach to expand quickly and may trigger vomiting.