

Tonsillectomy for children (page 1 of 2)

What are tonsils and does your child need them?

Tonsils are glands in the throat. There is one tonsil on each side of the throat. They are there to fight germs, but the body can still fight infections without them. We only take them out if they are doing more harm than good.

Why take them out?

Tonsillectomy is recommended:

- if there is recurrent tonsillitis despite treatment with antibiotics.
- if the tonsils are so large that they interfere with your child's breathing and cause snoring or obstruction.
- for older children who may have had a quinsy, which is an abscess that develops alongside the tonsils.

What are the alternatives?

- Waiting is always an option as tonsillitis may get better in time.
- It may be necessary to take antibiotics with an episode of tonsillitis.
- It is less sensible to delay for too long if there are obstructive problems (problems with breathing).

Is there anything I should do before the operation?

Please let us know if your child has a chest infection or severe tonsillitis in the week before the date for surgery as it may be better to postpone the operation.

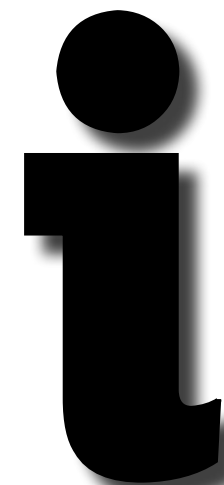
How is the operation done?

Your child will be asleep under general anaesthetic. We take the tonsils out through the mouth and then stop the bleeding. It takes about 30 minutes. A raw area is left at the site of the tonsils and this heals by itself.

How long will my child be in hospital?

If you live within 30 minutes of the hospital, your child is in its fifth year and weighs over 20 kg, the operation may be done as a day case.

ENT Department
01722 336262 ext. 2121 or 2209



If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: customercare@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

Otherwise, the surgeon may prefer your child to stay in hospital for one night. Either way, we will only let your child go home if there is no bleeding and when your child is eating and drinking and feels well enough.

Can there be problems?

Tonsil surgery is very safe but every operation has a small risk.

Bleeding - this can be a serious problem in young children. 1 in 20 children will be re-admitted to hospital but only 1 child out of 50 will need a second operation to stop the bleeding. Please let us know if there is a family history of bleeding problems.

Soreness - regular pain killers will be required.

Teeth - wobbly teeth may be knocked out.

Sickness (nausea) - may occur but usually settles quickly.

Infection - if your child does not eat properly an infection may develop and your child may develop a fever or bad breath. You should encourage your child to eat a normal diet with regular meals.

How long should my child stay off school?

For two weeks your child should rest at home away from crowds and smoky places and be kept away from people with coughs and colds. Your child may feel tired for the first few days after the operation.

Further advice after the operation

If you need further advice please contact:

The ENT Department 01722 336262 3xt 2121 or 2209 (office hours)

Day Surgery Unit 01722 336262 ext: 4550 between 7.30am and 7pm.

After 7pm or at weekends, please contact Sarum Ward on 01722 336262 ext 2560, your GP or NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 (24 hours a day).