POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS
TONSILLECTOMY AND ADENOIDECTOMY

- We wish there was no discomfort after a tonsillectomy, but there is always some, and frequently considerable. We are appreciative of it and deeply sympathetic toward it. It is one of the reasons we are very conservative in our indications for a tonsillectomy. Some patients are quite miserable for 10 days, others are not. Most of the discomfort is due to muscle soreness, not the raw surface. For this reason, first swallows in the morning and during sleeping are always the worst. The patient may awaken from a sound sleep with throat pain referred into the ear as an “earache.”

- Chewing pleasant favored gum forms saliva and increases the rate of gentle swallowing, which decreases the pain. Chew a great deal of gum, always for 30 minutes before meals and frequently in the middle of the night if pain awakens you. DO NOT use aspirin gum.

- Use the Tylenol freely for discomfort. You should take Demerol every 4-6 hours as needed for pain. Take some of the medication 30-60 minutes before meals to aid in swallowing. Also using the Tetracaine Lollipop as directed is a helpful aid in swallowing.

- Minimal activity is advisable the first day at home, but strict bed rest is not necessary. Activity should be increased each day afterwards. Avoid vigorous activity for two weeks.

- You may have anything to eat or drink that you want. Eat 5-6 light meals for the first few days rather than 3 larger meals. Be sure that fluid intake is adequate the first few days. Supplement it with ice cream, Jell-O, custard, milk shakes, popsicles, etc. Soft foods such as macaroni and cheese and mashed potatoes should be attempted as soon as possible as this may help with muscle pain and soreness. Avoid “tart” juices such as orange juice or lemonade. It is common after a Tonsillectomy to lose some weight. We do not worry too much about the patient not eating. They will eat when they are hungry. As long as you push fluids, the patient will be all right.

- Fever up to 101° and occasionally 102° is common afterwards. Most often this can be managed by increasing fluids and clearing lungs with deep breaths or coughing. You may use Tylenol to help decrease the fever. If fever above 101° persists, please call the office.
• Expect bad breath for 1-2 weeks.

• Do not mingle in groups of people or go to work/school for 5-7 days after surgery to avoid infection. Take all your antibiotic as directed.

• You may find that the inside of the mouth/throat has white patches. DO NOT be alarmed. This is normal and is not a sign of infection or “thrush.”

• Between the 5th and 10th postoperative day, the scab comes off the throat. More soreness may be experienced for 24 hours. In a few patients, some bleeding occurs. DO NOT be alarmed. Bleeding is not a terrible thing and is usually readily managed. If it occurs, the day should be spent quietly. Keep the head elevated in a comfortable semi-upright position and suck on ice chips intermittently. If it persists for an hour in a significant amount, please call the office.

• We do not see our Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy patients back post-operatively. In about 2 weeks from the procedure, the nurse will call you to see how the patient is doing.

• If you have any other questions, please don’t hesitate to call the office.