



All About Tonsillitis & Tonsillectomy



Changi
General Hospital
SingHealth

Tonsillitis is the infection or inflammation (swelling) of the tonsils. It can be caused by viruses or bacteria. Tonsillitis is very common especially in children.

Common symptoms:

- Sore throat
- Fever and chills
- Difficulty when swallowing
- Ear pain
- Headache
- Red or swollen tonsils
- Yellow or white coating on the tonsils
- Hoarseness or loss of voice
- Swollen glands in the neck / jaw area
- Bad breath
- Snoring
- Sleep disturbance



Causes of tonsillitis

Bacterial and viral infections can cause tonsillitis. A common cause is streptococcus (strep) bacteria. It can be spread through droplets.

Treatment

- Your doctor may prescribe a course of antibiotic treatment.
- Swollen tonsils that are not painful, or causing other problems, do not need to be treated. Antibiotics may not be prescribed. You may be asked to come back for a check up later to review the symptoms.

- As for viral tonsillitis, your immune system will fight off the infection on its own. You are encouraged to have more rest and to relieve the symptoms by:
 - 1) Taking pain medications (acetaminophen / paracetamol and / or ibuprofen) to relieve throat pain and fever.
 - 2) Sore throat can be relieved by gargling warm salt water or taking lozenges.

What is tonsillectomy?

Tonsillectomy is an operation to remove tonsils from the throat.

When is tonsillectomy needed?

When there is recurrent infection, infected / enlarged tonsils that result in upper airway obstruction, a surgery is needed to remove the tonsils. Tonsillectomy can be done as Day Surgery. General anaesthesia will be given. You will be discharged within four to six hours when anaesthesia wears off. You should take the medications as prescribed by doctor.

Post-operative care:

1. You may experience some bleeding post operatively, use of ice water mouth washes can help lessen bleeding. If there is massive bleeding, please return to the A&E department immediately.
2. Soft diet is encouraged and need to be taken for two weeks until the pain subsides.
3. You are expected to experience throat pain for about two weeks following surgery. You have to avoid taking hot food, spicy food and hard food while experiencing pain. Soft diet and cold food such as ice cream and jellies are encouraged as they are easier for swallowing.





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