

**Patient Advice Sheet on Adenoidectomy  
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***What are the adenoids?***

They are lumps of special tissue in the throat. They are behind the palate on the back wall of the throat. They are made of lymphoid tissue. Lymphoid tissue traps germs and makes antibodies to fight infection.

***Do I need them?***

No. Your body can fight infection without them. You have plenty of other similar tissue. Yours are doing more harm than good.

***Why take them out?***

To stop ear infections.

To improve the hearing in glue ear.

Some small children have huge adenoids which block their breathing at night.

***Does it always work?***

No. It almost always helps if the problem is obstruction.

It helps about 80% of cases of glue ear and ear-ache a lot.

***Do I have to have my adenoids out?***

No. It is your choice. We call this elective. You will grow out of your ear problems probably some time after you are eight. There are alternative treatments. What they are depends on what is wrong with you. Antibiotic may help infections. Grommets may help infections and hearing. Hearing aids may help hearing. There is no other treatment for an obstructed airway.

***Who shouldn't have their adenoids out?***

Anyone who has had problems with a short or cleft palate.

***Do I need to take care before my operation?***

Tell us if you have a sore throat or cold in the week beforehand. It may be better to leave it for a few weeks.

***How is the operation done?***

You are taken to the anaesthetic room. You will be made to sleep by an anaesthetist. They are doctors who specialize in this. They will explain the anaesthetic to you. When you are asleep we take you into the theatre. We take your adenoids out through your mouth. It takes about 30 minutes. You will wake up in the recovery room. This is next door to the operating theatre. You will be in the operating department for about an hour.

***How long will I be in hospital?***

You come on the day of the operation. We will let you go home the same day or the day after the operation if you are eating and drinking and feel well enough.

***How should I travel home?***

You may have a bleed. It is best to go home in a car or a taxi. Avoid public transport.

***Can there be problems?***

Adenoid surgery is very safe. But every operation and anaesthetic has a small risk. This is much the same as the risks of everyday life. For example, crossing the road, driving a car, flying in a plane. The most common problem is bleeding. This may need a second operation to

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stop it. It does not happen often. It happens in about one in a hundred cases in our unit. It may occur at any time from the start of the operation until the throat is fully healed. It is most common in the first 6 hours and at around the 6<sup>th</sup> day.

During the operation, there is a very small chance that we may chip or knock out a tooth, especially if it is loose, capped or crowned. Please let us know if you have any teeth like this. Some children feel sick after the operation. This settles quickly.

Sometimes the voice alters a little. It sounds a little nasal. Nearly always this is just for a short time.

Sometimes food and drink comes back down your nose after the operation. Take care when you have a drink. This usually lasts only a few days.

### ***What do I do after the operation?***

Rest at home for a week or two while your throat heals. Go back to school or work then. If you are not sure ask your GP.

Fresh air is good but keep away from crowded places.

Don't do anything which makes you hot or flushed.

Ask your nurse if you need a sick note.

You may also feel tired for the first few days.

### ***Will my throat be sore?***

Not very. Take the painkillers you are given if you need them. Do not take more than it says on the label. **DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN - IT CAN MAKE YOU BLEED.**

### ***What should I eat?***

Eat as normally as possible and drink plenty.

### ***What will my throat look like?***

Normal usually as you can't see where the adenoids used to be. Sometimes you can just see the edge of the cut where they were.

### ***What if my throat bleeds?***

If you have any persistent bleeding you must see a doctor. Call your GP or the ward. Or go to the nearest Accident & Emergency department.

### ***May I ask a question?***

At any time. You can also refuse to have the operation at any time. If you ask a question please ask someone suitable. A junior doctor or nurse may not know what you want to know. Please do not ask several doctors the same question and compare answers.