

**Patient Advice Sheet on Uvulopalatopharyngoplasty or UVPPP  
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***What is a UVPPP?***

We take out your tonsils. Have they been taken out already? If so, we take out the lining of the throat where they used to be. We take off your uvula. We trim the edge of your soft palate. We trim the membranes around the tonsil. We stitch the wounds closed.

Tonsils are lumps of special tissue in the throat. There is one each side. They are at the back of the palate and tongue. They are made of lymphoid tissue. Lymphoid tissue traps germs and makes antibodies to fight infection.

The roof of the mouth is called the palate. The back of it is the soft palate.

The faucial pillars are membranes which pass down from palate. There are two either side. One is in front of the tonsil, the other behind.

The uvula hangs from the middle of the back of your palate.

***Do I need them?***

No. You do not need your tonsils. Your body can fight infection without them. You have plenty of other similar tissue. You don't need all of the other bits we take. We must not take too much.

***Why have a UVPPP?***

If you snore with your palate, this operation may help.

***Do I have to have a UVPPP?***

No. It is your choice. We call this elective. The snoring will continue.

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

Tell us if you have a sore throat or cold the week before. It may be best to leave it 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 tonsils and the other bits out through your mouth. It takes about 60 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 and a half.

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

You come on the day of the operation. We will let you go home 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?***

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.

One problem is bleeding. This may need a second operation to 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.

## **UVPPP**

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 people feel sick after the operation. This settles quickly.

When you swallow food or drink, may go into the back of your nose. Nearly always this is bad just for a short time. You may have permanent problems if you try to drink too quickly.

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

You may feel there is a lump in your throat.

You may feel you have more mucus going from your nose into your throat.

The operation may not relieve your snoring enough.

The snoring may come back over the years.

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

Rest at home for two weeks while your throat heals. Go back to 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?***

Your throat will be very sore indeed. It may well get worse for a few days. After about the fifth day it gradually gets better. Take the painkillers you are given regularly half an hour before meals for the first few days. 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. Eating will help your throat to heal. It will help the pain too. It is the chewing and swallowing which helps. Chewing gum will also help the pain. Avoid foods that can make the tonsil area sore.

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

The palate will lie further forward. The back of the palate will be U-shaped.

### ***Why have I got sore ears?***

This is normal. Your throat and ears share the same nerves. It does not mean that you have an ear infection.

### ***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.