

# Will I have a sore throat after my tonsillectomy?

## An Information Sheet for Parents and Children

Hi, I'm Paul. I'm a Consultant Anaesthetist at the RUH. My daughter Bea is 8 years old and recently had a tonsillectomy. I thought it might be useful to talk about what to expect following the surgery.

Bea how are you now?

I feel good. I don't get tonsillitis any more and I'm sleeping much better now and have more energy.

Was it sore after the operation?

Yes it was very sore for about 7 days. A bit like having really bad tonsillitis. I also had some earache too. Chewing gum helped a bit.

Did the painkillers help?

Yes they helped a lot but it started to hurt again when the medicine started to wear off.

It is really quite sore for about 7-10 days following a tonsillectomy and the pain can peak around 5-7 days after the operation. It is important to give regular painkillers especially about half an hour before eating so that your child can eat and drink comfortably. It is important that they drink and avoid becoming dehydrated and eat things that are a bit crunchy to help clean the slough (dead tissue) from the back of the throat. This helps stop the tissue from becoming infected. If the tissue does become infected, it increases the chance of bleeding, one of the more serious complications of the operation. Bea found eating cornflakes, toast and kit-kat type biscuits did the trick.

Here are some photographs of what her throat looked like after the operation. It is normal for the breath to smell bad during this time.

**Day 1**



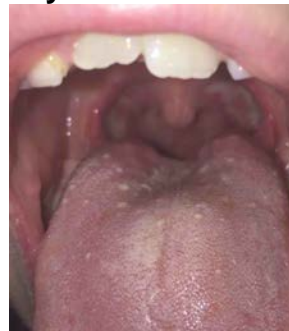
**Day 5**



**Day 8**



**Day 10**



Regular dosing of both paracetamol and ibuprofen is really important. The combination works very well together. The dose of these painkillers is worked out from the weight of your child in kilograms. You will be told exactly how much painkiller your child can take.

Paracetamol should be given four times a day. We advise that a dose is given before bed and on waking. The other two doses should be given half an hour before lunch and supper so that your child is able to eat and drink comfortably.

Ibuprofen should be given three times a day. We advise that a dose is given half an hour before meal times so that your child is able to eat and drink comfortably. Ibuprofen can thin the blood so it is important to stop the ibuprofen if there is any evidence of bleeding. If there is any more than streaks or flecks of blood then you should stop the ibuprofen and see your GP or return to hospital. Ibuprofen can upset the stomach so if your child develops tummy pain, stop the ibuprofen and take your child to see your GP.

If you are also given stronger painkillers like tramadol or morphine for your child, only use these when the paracetamol and ibuprofen are not working well enough on their own. Both tramadol and morphine can make your child a bit sleepy so it is important to make sure that you can rouse them easily and that their breathing does not become too slow. **You should not use these medicines if your child is sleepy, breathing slowly or if they have any underlying breathing problems.**

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to telephone the Children's Ward on 01225 – 824421 or contact your GP.

So Bea, are you pleased you've had your tonsils taken out?

Yes I am now. It was sore at the time but now I'm much better. So don't be scared if you need the operation, you'll feel much better afterwards.

## Pain Diary

You may find it helpful to use the pain diary on the next page to keep a record of when your child's medicine is next due (top part of the table).

You can also use it to track how they are improving (lower part of table). You can use the pain assessment tool below to ask your child how much pain they are in, by discussing the pictures with them and putting the corresponding score (0-10) in the table.

## Pain assessment tool



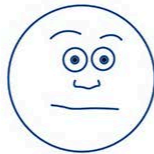
**0**

No  
Hurt



**2**

Hurts  
Little Bit



**4**

Hurts  
Little More



**6**

Hurts  
Even More



**8**

Hurts  
Whole Lot



**10**

Hurts  
Worst

Pain Diary										
Medication	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Paracetamol										
Ibuprofen										
Tramadol OR Morphine (Oramorph)										
Average daily pain score. 0 = no pain, 10 = worst pain										
Sleeping through the night										
Drinking regularly										
Eating regularly										

*Adapted from the Bristol Royal Hospital for Children*

Please consider taking a photograph of the completed pain diary and email it to [paul.hersch@nhs.net](mailto:paul.hersch@nhs.net) for audit purposes. This will help us to see how well we are doing and to improve our service. Thank you!



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different format, or would like to feedback your  
experience of the hospital. Email [ruh-  
tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net) or  
telephone 01225 825656.