

Mouth and Throat Surgery

General Information

- After an anaesthetic, it is common to feel groggy for up to 24 hours. Children are often quite disorientated for the first hour or so. Nausea +/- vomiting is quite common after an anaesthetic. Medication can be given if this is difficult to tolerate.
- Depending on the exact operation, pain can vary from very mild to significant. Ask your surgeon about how to manage any expected pain.
- Arrange for someone else to drive you home from the hospital.

Pain Relief/Antibiotics

Your surgeon will provide a script for pain relief, or instructions on what to buy from the chemist.

Typical types of pain relief include:

- Paracetamol (Panadol, Chemist's Own etc): use this regularly (four times a day, spread evenly throughout the day), as your 'first line' pain relief. Make sure you use the dose appropriate for your/your child's weight, rather than purely based on age.
- Anti-inflammatory medication (e.g. ibuprofen): Use a dose appropriate to your/your child's weight, up to three times/day. Ibuprofen can be safely given in combination with paracetamol, or as an alternating dose (e.g. paracetamol at 7am, ibuprofen at 10am, paracetamol at midday etc).
- Numbing gargles/jelly: this often offers excellent relief. If the wound is in the mouth, leave a 'dollop' of jelly (e.g. Xylocaine Viscus) on its surface until the area is completely numb, then spit it out. If the wound is in the throat, use an over-the-counter gargle (e.g. Difflam, Cepacaine) to numb the area, then spit it out. These can be used multiple times a day, enabling you to eat and drink while the area is numb.
- Stronger pain relief: e.g. codeine, oxycodone. This may be prescribed as an additional medication, or in a pre-prepared mix with paracetamol (e.g. PainStop, Panadeine Forte). If using a combination medication, make sure you use it IN PLACE of paracetamol, rather than as well as this, to avoid overdosing.
- If your surgeon prescribes other medication for you, take them as directed.

Eating and Drinking

- It's usually perfectly fine to eat normal foods immediately following surgery. Your surgeon will explain if there are any restrictions in what you can eat after your operation.
- It is very important that you drink plenty of fluid during recovery. Dehydration results in increased pain, risk of readmission to hospital, and bleeding.
- Acidic foods such as citrus fruits and tomatoes often 'sting' when in contact with raw surfaces in the mouth or throat. However, they won't cause any physical damage.
- Soft foods such as jelly, ice cream and yoghurt are often more easy to eat in the first few days.

Activities

- Take the remainder of the day off once you get home from your operation. Sometimes the 'hangover' of the anaesthetic can last through the next day, so anticipate having this off. Many people feel well enough to get back to regular activities the next day.
- If you have had surgery on your voice box (larynx), please check with your surgeon about when and how you should recommence talking and other speaking duties. Note that talking at a normal volume is less strain on your voice box than whispering. If you need to talk, do so at a normal volume.

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- Check with your surgeon about when to return to work. Most people are right to get back to work after one week for sedentary work, or two weeks if your job is physically strenuous. If the area operated on is quite limited, you may be back to full speed after one or two days.
- Be careful with driving if you still feel groggy from the anaesthetic, or if the seatbelt or moving your head causes pain.
- Avoid strenuous exercise (team sports, jogging, heavy weights etc) for two -three weeks after the operation, and be sensible when you recommence these.

When to Seek Medical Advice

- A fever of >38 degrees.
- New fresh bleeding, increasing swelling, redness or increasing mouth, throat or chest pain.
- A 'bubbly' feeling under the skin, like bubble of air trapped there.
- Excessive pain, which doesn't respond to pain relief
- Excessive sedation from pain relief tablets.
- Severe pain, nausea with vomiting, or severe dizziness, especially if it persists for more than a day.
- If you/your child can't drink enough fluid/eat enough to avoid dehydration.
- **Please note that The Northern Hospital does NOT have a permanent ENT doctor present on site. Please do NOT return to our Emergency Department if you need urgent care, as we will need to transfer you elsewhere for care. Suitable alternatives include The Austin Hospital, Sunshine Hospital or Royal Children's Hospital (children only).**

Follow-Up

- Your ENT Surgeon will make an appointment to see you about one - two weeks after your operation. The nursing staff will give you this appointment before you are discharged from hospital.

Contact Details:

Northern Hospital Children's Ward: (03) 8405 8415

Northern Hospital Day Surgical Centre (adults): (03) 8405 8501

Northern Hospital Outpatient Department: (03) 8405 8335

Medical Advice (for emergencies only, please):

- Mon-Fri 8am-4pm: (03) 8405 8000, ask for the 'ENT Registrar On Call'
- After hours: Austin Health (03) 9496 5000, ask for the 'ENT Registrar On Call'

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