

Contact Numbers

If you have any concerns or queries regarding your surgery or follow up: please contact the ward that you had your surgery on:

St Helens	Sanderson Suite 01744 646 098
Whiston	Ward 4B on 0151 430 1637
Southport	01704 705 227
Ormskirk	01695 656 885

Where else can I find information about tonsillectomy?

The ENT UK website also has a short information leaflet on tonsillectomy in adults, visit:

<https://www.entuk.org/>

The Royal College of Anaesthetist's also has a leaflet on tonsillectomy as a day case, visit:

<http://www.rcoa.ac.uk> and search for 'tonsillectomy day surgery'.

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital
Marshall's Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA
Telephone: 01744 26633

Southport Hospital
Town Lane, Kew,
Southport, Merseyside,
PR8 6PN
Telephone: 01704 547 471

Ormskirk Hospital
Dicconson Way, Wigan Road,
Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2AZ
Telephone: 01695 577 111

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**Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Tonsillectomy

Patient discharge information

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format
please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید،
لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie,
proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil,
vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe
de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق
يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

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What are tonsils?

Tonsils are small glands in the throat, one on each side. They are there to fight germs when you are a young child. As you get older the tonsils become less important in fighting germs and usually shrink.

Do you need them?

Your body can still fight germs without them. We only take them out if they are doing more harm than good.

Why take them out?

Surgery to remove your tonsils is called a tonsillectomy. We only take the tonsils out if:

- They cause recurrent tonsillitis (sore throat due to infected tonsils) despite treatment with antibiotics.
- If they are large and block the airway.
- An abscess develops alongside the tonsil as a result of tonsil infection. This is called a quinsy and is unpleasant. People who have had more than one quinsy often choose to have their tonsils removed to stop having another.
- We suspect there is a tumour in the tonsil. A rapid increase in the size of the tonsil, changes in appearance of the tonsil or bleeding may occur if a tumour of the tonsil develops. Tumours of the tonsil are rare.

- It is important that you eat and drink after the operation to encourage the healing process and prevent infection and bleeding. Infection can cause bleeding. Coarse foods, like cornflakes and toast are best, but soft food is better than no food. Eat little and often after surgery if you cannot manage full meals. Painkillers and sucking an ice-lolly before trying to eat can be helpful. Chewing gum may also help the pain.
- **Bleeding can be serious:** If you notice any bleeding from your throat you must see a doctor. Call your GP, the ward or go to the nearest Emergency Department.
- You will need 10 to 14 days off work: Make sure you rest at home away from crowds and smoky places. Keep away from people with coughs and colds and wash your hands often to avoid catching a cold. You may feel tired for the first few days but this is normal and you should make sure that you rest.

After your procedure

- **Your throat will be sore:** Your throat will be sore for about 10 days. It tends to get worse up to about 5 days after surgery, before getting better. It is important to take painkillers regularly, half an hour before meals for at least the first week.
- Do not take aspirin because it may make you bleed.
- **You may have sore ears:** This is normal. It happens because your throat and ears have the same nerves. It does not mean that you have an ear infection.
- The pain may peak towards the end of the first week after the operation, and then starts to improve in the second week. The throat would normally be fully healed by about 2 weeks.
- **Your throat will look white:** This is normal while your throat heals. You may also see small threads in your throat, they are used to help stop the bleeding during the operation and they will fall out by themselves. Some people get a throat infection after surgery. If this happens you may notice a fever, a bad smell from your throat and worsening pain. Call your GP or the hospital for advice if this happens.

Do I have to have my tonsils out?

You will not always need to have your tonsils out. You may want to just wait and see if the tonsil problem gets better by itself. The doctor will explain to you why he or she feels that surgery is the best treatment.

You may change your mind about the operation at any time and signing a consent form does not mean that you have to have the operation. If you would like to have a second opinion about the treatment you can ask your specialist.

How is the operation done?

You will be asleep under general anaesthetic. We take the tonsils out through your mouth, and then to stop the bleeding. This takes about 30 minutes.

How long will I be in hospital?

In some hospitals, surgeons prefer tonsillectomy patients to stay in hospital for one night, although in some cases tonsils are removed as a day case procedure. Either way, we will only let you go home when you are eating and drinking and feel well enough.

Are there any risks or possible complications?

- The most serious problem is bleeding. This may need a second operation to stop it but this is very rare. About 1 in every 200 patients having a tonsillectomy will have some bleeding in the first few hours after the surgery and will need to go back to the operating theatre for this to be dealt with. About 5 in every 100 patients will have some bleeding after going home (most towards the end of the first week and always by 2 weeks) and 1 in 100 will have to go back to theatre for the bleeding spot to be cauterized.
- Nausea and vomiting is quite common in the first few hours but usually settles quite quickly.
- As a raw area is left where the tonsils are removed, bacteria can get in and cause infection. This is rare, and usually easily treated with antibiotics.
- 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.
- **Swelling of the uvula:** The dangly bit at the back of your throat, called the uvula, can swell up after the operation. You might feel like you have something stuck at the back of your throat. This gets better within a few days.

- A change in taste after the operation. Although extremely rare, this can be permanent.
- **After the operation:** Your throat will be sore after the operation, but painkillers will have been given during the operation and will continue on return to the ward. Some patients feel sick and vomit soon after coming back to the ward. The nursing staff will continue with the usual observations of pulse and temperature. After a couple of hours they will encourage you to start drinking, and then to eat.
- You need to remain on the ward for a minimum of 6 hours after the operation. If you are well after this time, eating and drinking and your pulse and temperature are normal, you may be able to go home. This will depend on the reason for the operation, how far away you live from the hospital, your transport situation and the time of day. The nursing staff would discuss this with you on the day.