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HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING TONSILLECTOMY OR ADENOTONSILLECTOMY

* Avoid strenuous activity for 14 days after surgery.
* Frequent coughing, yelling and clearing of the throat should be avoided as this will increase post-operative pain and your risk for bleeding.
* Avoid any foods with sharp edges such as pizza crust, chips, pretzels, taco shells, popcorn, etc for two weeks after surgery.
* Drinking plenty of fluids is very important. The most common problem postoperatively is dehydration.

DIET:

* For the first 24 hours after surgery, it is more comfortable to drink only cold, non-irritating liquids because they are easier to swallow than solid food. These liquids include water, non-irritating fruit juices such as apple, apricot, grape or pear, popsicles, Kool-aid, Gatorade, Powerade and Vitamin Water.
* Custard, pudding, apple sauce, Jell-O, ice cream and yogurt are also easy to swallow and are recommended for better nutrition. Keep in mind though, that dairy products may cause the patient to create more mucous in their throat. If this happens, stick with non-dairy soft foods.
* You will want to avoid citrus fruits and juices and hot and highly seasoned foods simply because they may be painful to swallow. Avoid foods with sharp edges such as pizza crust, chips, pretzels, taco shells, popcorn, etc.
* After 24 hours, you can start re-introducing soft foods such as cooked eggs, mashed potatoes, apple sauce, soft vegetables, soft meat or chicken, cooked cereals, strained soup, pears, peaches, apricots or other soft foods that you like and are not irritating.
* Gradually resume normal diet but avoid hot, spicy or highly seasoned foods, potato chips, nuts, dry toast, popcorn and crackers until 2 weeks after surgery.
* Drinking plenty of fluids is very important. Adults should drink six 8-ounce glasses of liquid each day. A child should drink at least 1-2 tablespoons of liquid every 30 minutes. Encourage liquid intake in children. Popsicles are a good addition for fluid intake. You will aid the healing process and experience less pain if you keep up your fluid intake as well.
* Urine output is a sign of getting enough fluid. If urine appears dark yellow, drink more fluid. A child or adult urinating light yellow 4-5 times per day is probably getting enough fluid.

MEDICATIONS:

* Adult patients may receive a prescription for narcotic pain killers. These products cause somnolence, drowsiness, nausea and constipation. Patients who take pain killers should not operate machinery, drive or make important decisions.
* For children, national guidelines recommend alternating Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and Motrin every 3-4 hours as needed for pain. It is important that your child take a drink and one dose of medicine during the night to avoid dryness that occurs while sleeping.

ACTIVITY GUIDELINES:

* Strength will come back quickly. A person who has had a tonsillectomy and/or an adenoidectomy should do as much as is comfortable without getting tired. Light, easy walks are good for you once you feel up to it. Get your doctor’s OK before participating in sports or exercise. No strenuous activity for 14 days after surgery.
* Children should be kept indoors and relatively quiet for the first 7 days.
* Frequent coughing and clearing of the throat should be avoided.
* No hot tubs for the first week.
* No sitting out in the sun for long periods of time for the first week. Getting overheated is not good.
* Avoid people who have colds, the flu or any lung or respiratory infection.

MOUTH CARE

* Teeth should be brushed as often as before, preferably 2-3 times per day.
* The mouth should be rinsed after each meal with water or mouth rinse. Be sure to use a mouth rinse which contains NO alcohol.
* Do not gargle vigorously for three weeks.
* Objectionable/foul mouth odor is commonly observed and is relieved by abundant fluid intake.
* Do not smoke.

WHAT TO EXPECT FOLLOWING SURGERY

* A white or gray membrane on the sides of the throat is normal and should disappear in 1 to 2 weeks.
* Earache is expected. It is not an ear infection. It is referred pain from the throat.
* Occasionally, a transient neck stiffness may occur in children following adenoidectomy.

REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR AFTER SURGERY

FEVER

* Most children experience a low-grade temperature. This is caused by dehydration. Encourage fluid intake and if needed, use Tylenol (NOT ASPIRIN). If the temperature remains above 101°F (38.0 Celsius) and does not respond to Tylenol and Motrin or if the child refuses to drink, then IV fluids are required. Please call our office or the closest emergency room.

BLEEDING

* In about 2-5% of patients there is some bleeding within the first 24 hours or after 6 to 10 days. If this happens to you, do not become excited, remain calm. Gargle the throat gently with ice water for 10 minutes. If still bleeding, then present to the nearest emergency department to be evaluated and call your surgeon.

DEHYDRATION

* The most common problem postoperatively is dehydration. Decreased urination or urine that is excessively concentrated (foul smelling or dark yellow) is a sign of dehydration. Please encourage adequate hydration as outlined above. In the event that the patient is unable to take in enough fluids or is unable to keep them down because of nausea, please present to the emergency room as intravenous hydration may be required.