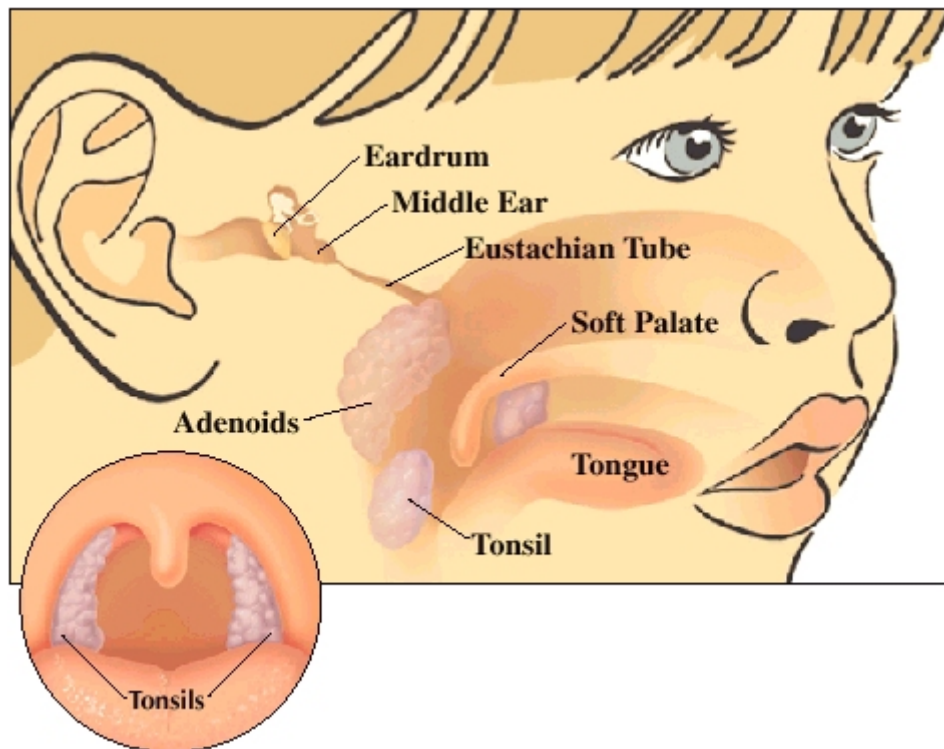


Tonsils and Adenoids

What are they?

The tonsils are soft tissue at the back of the throat, and together with the adenoids (at the back of the nose) they make a ring of tissue that help to protect the body from certain bacteria and viruses that you may ingest.

They form just one part of the bodies defence system, so even if they are removed, you do not suffer a long-term reduction in your immune system is health.



When they might need to be removed

Removing the tonsils or adenoids are two different operations which may be done at the same time. This is because they are in the same area and can be affected by the same conditions.

For children, tonsillectomy and possibly adenoids maybe removed because of difficulty breathing and sleeping (large tonsils or adenoids can prevent child from breathing normally through the mouth or nose. This may lead to short periods during sleep where the child stops breathing, otherwise termed 'sleep apnoea').

Other reasons for removal include;

Many throat or ear infections – if conservative treatment does not help, a

child/adult may benefit from surgery to remove the tonsils
Trouble with swallowing
A growth in or on the tonsil

Prior to having surgery please ensure that you feel that all of your questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

What happens during the operation?

Tonsillectomy may be performed as Day Surgery, depending on the age, size and health of your child. Some children will need to stay overnight.

A short period of fasting will be required prior to a general anaesthetic, and this is important to ensure the safety of the child's lungs (which are ventilated by a tube) during the time that the operation takes place.

There are some medications that can increase the chance of bleeding, and these may need to be ceased prior to the operation, and restarted again only with the permission of your specialist.

Please ensure you have disclosed all medications, herbal remedies and supplements with your specialist prior to the operation.

During the operation, no pain is felt as the anaesthetic and painkillers are administered. Following the operation some children wake up a little drowsy, and a minority of children will wake up distressed. A parent being at the bedside, and a favourite toy or book will often help in these situations.

Other common post-operative experiences include an upset stomach, sore throat, and pain in the ears – which is quite common and may occur over a few days. This is because the same nerve of sensation that sends a branch to the tonsil also sends a branch to the ear. It will subside as the tonsil heals.

For other specific risks and benefits of surgery please speak to your specialist, anaesthetist, and refer to the patient information sheet provided by your surgeon.