

Adenoidectomy (child)

ENT05 Lite - Expires end of January 2024



This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What are adenoids?

The adenoids are part of a group of lymphoid tissues (like the glands in the neck or the tonsils) that help to fight off infection from germs that are breathed in or swallowed.

How do adenoids become enlarged?

The adenoids enlarge naturally in children at around the age of 3 and usually shrink away again by the age of 7. The enlargement happens because children are exposed to a lot of new infections at this age and have many colds.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Your child should get relief from a blocked or runny nose, and may get a better quality of sleep. This may improve the quality of your child's voice.

An adenoidectomy can also help if your child has glue ear by reducing the risk of fluid collecting in the middle ear.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Your doctor may be able to give you steroid nasal sprays to improve your child's symptoms of a blocked nose and reduce the size of the adenoids. However, these must be used for a long time and the long-term effects are not yet known.

There are no other treatments for enlarged adenoids other than to leave them alone and wait for the problem to get better.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes about 20 minutes.

Your surgeon will remove the adenoids through your child's mouth. They will place a pack in the back of the nose until the bleeding stops.

What can I do to prepare my child for the operation?

Your child should try to maintain a healthy weight. They will have a higher risk of developing complications if they are overweight. If your child is having surgery to improve their breathing during sleep, it is less likely to be successful.

What complications can happen?

- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Adenoid tissue regrowing
- Earache
- Stiff jaw

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain

How soon will my child recover?

They should be able to go home the same day or the day after.

Your child will need 2 days off school to avoid catching an infection that could lead to bleeding.

Most children make a good recovery.

Summary

Enlarged adenoids are a common problem that usually do not need treatment. For those children who have a very blocked nose or disturbed sleep, an adenoidectomy should give them a better quality of life.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

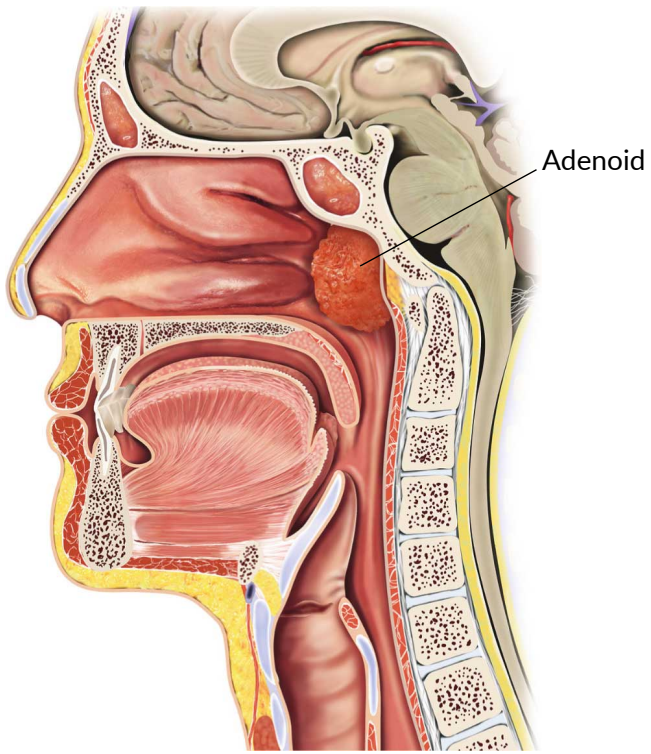
Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

Acknowledgements

Reviewer

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An enlarged adenoid

Illustrator

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