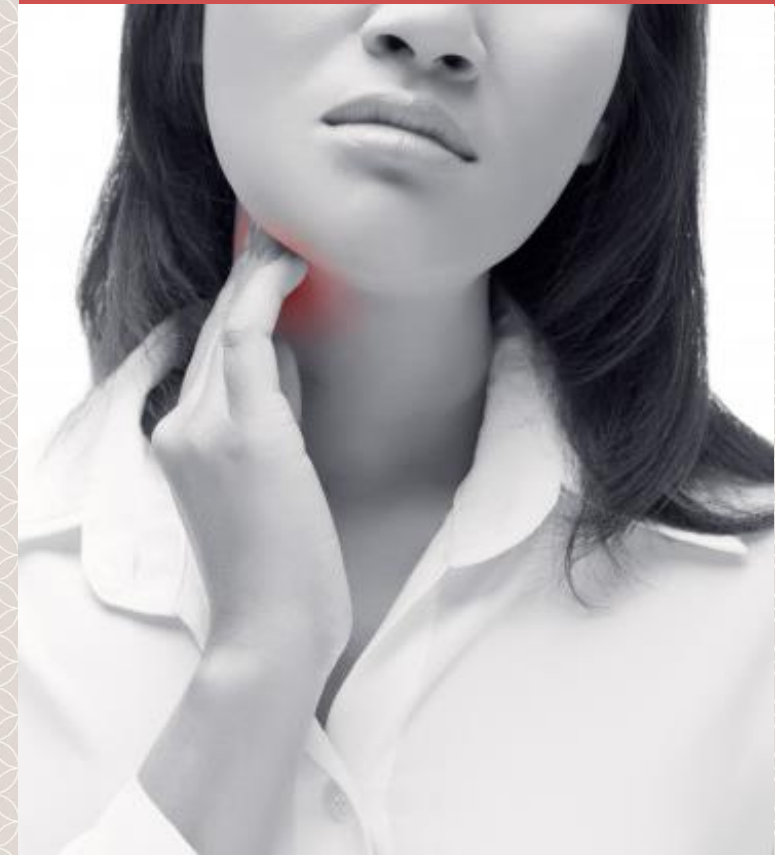


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Department of  
**OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY**  
**(EAR, NOSE & THROAT)**

## TONSILLECTOMY

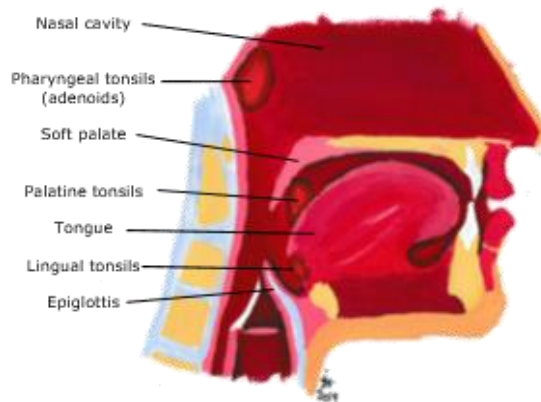


## What are Tonsils?

Tonsils are lymphoid tissue located at:

- The throat (palatine tonsils)
- Behind the nose (adenoids/pharyngeal tonsils)
- At the back part of the tongue (lingual tonsils)

Most people refer to the throat (palatine tonsils) when they talk about tonsils. Tonsils have some role in the immunity of the upper airway in young children. However, diseased tonsils are less effective in its function and may even be a source of throat infection (tonsillitis).



Picture courtesy of Dr Yeo Jia Xuan

## What is Tonsillectomy?

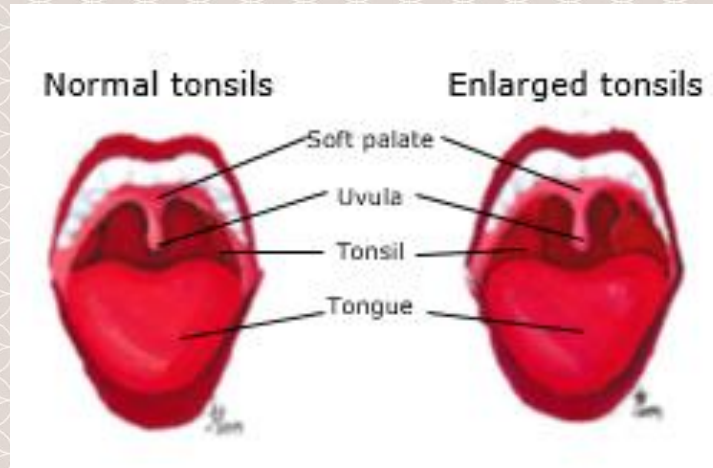
Tonsillectomy is a surgery to remove the palatine tonsils from the throat. It is commonly done under general anaesthesia, through the mouth opening.



Picture courtesy of Dr Yeo Jia Xuan

## When is Tonsillectomy Necessary?

- Recurrent tonsillitis (infection)
- Enlarged tonsils causing narrowing of the upper airway. This may lead to obstructive sleep apnoea
- To obtain tissue biopsy for abnormal tonsils or suspected tumour
- Acute peritonsillar abscess (pus collection beside the tonsil) that is not responding to medical treatment and simple drainage



Picture courtesy of Dr Yeo Jia Xuan

## What are the Complications of Tonsillectomy?

- Wound complications:
  - Bleeding (up to 5% of people experience this)
  - Infection
  - Scarring
- Rare accidental injury to surrounding areas during surgery e.g. lips, teeth, tongue, throat and temporomandibular joint
- Altered taste and tongue numbness (usually temporary)
- Velopharyngeal insufficiency – nasal regurgitation and hypernasal speech (usually temporary)
- Adverse reaction to general anaesthesia e.g. reaction to drugs, heart attack and stroke

## Post-Surgery Care

- Throat pain for about two weeks is expected.
- Keep yourself well hydrated by taking more fluids.
- Avoid taking hot, spicy or hard food. Soft, cool food like ice cream may be easier to swallow.
- Small amount of blood stained saliva may be seen. If you see a large amount of fresh blood from your throat, please return to the Emergency Department.