

When can my child return to school after tonsillectomy?

Recovery after tonsillectomy is quite variable. Be prepared for the possibility of your child needing a full week off of school. However, we also sometimes see children who bounce back surprisingly quickly and are ready to go back sooner.

All children after tonsillectomy should probably be home for the first 3 days after surgery. After that, the patient may return to school whenever the patient and parents feel that it is appropriate.

Some questions to consider:

- Is my child still requiring **pain medication** every few hours? If yes, then it is probably wise to keep the child home a bit longer.
- Is my child feeling **energetic** enough to go to school or are they still tired and feeling “blah”? If child is not feeling well enough that they will actually get something useful out of being in school, then it is probably wise to keep them home a bit longer.
- Is my child **drinking enough to stay well hydrated**? The single most important factor in helping speed recovery and reduce chance of bleeding after surgery is staying hydrated! If you child is not able to drink enough to stay hydrated during the school day, then it is probably wise to keep them home a bit longer.

There is ~2% chance of bleeding in the first 2 weeks after tonsillectomy and so we ask that patients avoid activities that will significantly raise pressure in the head (e.g. rough-housing, running, jumping, doing flips, hanging upside down on monkey bars, etc.). For this reason, we ask that recess and gym activities be limited for 2 weeks after surgery. This would be something to discuss with the school.

We also recommend a soft diet for 2 weeks after surgery (also to minimize the chance of bleeding). This is also something that should be discussed with the school when the child returns.

If you need a note for school or any other information, please call our ENT clinic at (217) 222-6550, ext. 6900. We will be happy to fax a letter to your child's school (or other activities) and also to answer any questions.