Home Care after Sleep Surgery-Uvulopalatopharyngoplasty (UP3) and/or Tonsillectomy

The above surgeries are all performed on patients to help relieve or lessen the symptoms of sleep apnea. All address the palate, or the upper part of your throat.

General Information
You may lack energy for several days, and may also be restless at night. This will improve over the next 10 to 14 days. It is quite common to feel progressively worse during the first five to six days after surgery. You may also become constipated during this time for three reasons: you will not be eating a regular diet, you will be taking pain medications, and you may be less active.

Wound Care
All of the above surgeries are performed within the mouth on the upper throat. No external incisions are made, all are internal. Depending on the surgery, you may feel and/or see some suture on your palate (upper throat). This is normal and will dissolve over the next two weeks. No specific wound care is necessary for these procedures.

Diet
It is important for you to drink plenty of fluids after surgery. Drink every hour while awake. A soft diet is recommended for the first 14 days (anything that you may eat without teeth constitutes as a soft diet). Avoid hot liquids/solids. It is alright if you don’t feel like eating much, as long as you drink lots of fluids. Signs that you need to drink more are when the urine is darker in color (urine should be pale yellow). A high fever that persists may also be a sign that you are not taking in enough fluids. As your appetite improves, solid foods and chewing should be strongly encouraged. You should avoid foods that may get stuck in your throat, such as chips or popcorn.

Activity
You should rest at home for the first 48 hours. Activity may increase as strength returns. Generally patients return to work approximately 10-14 days. All heavy lifting, exercise or other vigorous activity should be avoided for 14 days after surgery.

Pain
Throat and ear pain (referred) can be severe after these surgeries. Use pain medications as needed and as directed; however, be aware that prescription pain medication makes sleep apnea worse. You are therefore encouraged to use over the counter medications primarily, with prescription meds to be used for severe pain only.

Bad Breath/Snoring
Bad breath is very common due to the healing in the back of the throat. You may gargle with a mild salt water solution to improve the bad breath (1/2 teaspoon table salt to eight oz. of warm tap water) and/or chew gum. Most people breathe through the mouth and snore during the recovery period due to swelling. This may last between 2-3 weeks. It may be helped by propping up with pillows. Turning on a humidifier at bedtime may lessen throat dryness caused by mouth breathing. Avoid over-the-counter mouthwashes (Cepacol, Scope, Listerine, etc.) as they tend to dry the throat and cause discomfort.
**Bleeding**
There should be NO bleeding from the nose or mouth. If you see any bleeding at all, sit upright and phone your doctor immediately. Swishing the mouth out with cold ice water may help stop the bleeding (rinse and spit over and over). In tonsillectomy, between 5 and 10 days after surgery, the white or grayish membrane (soft scab) breaks off in the back of the throat. A small amount of bloody mucus may be spit up. If this continues after a few minutes, please call the doctor. If you are unable to reach the doctor quickly, please go to the emergency room.

**Fever**
It is normal to have a slight fever (99.0° to 101.0°) for the first few days following surgery. Good fluid intake and Tylenol will help keep the fever down. If the fever is over 101 degrees contact your doctor.

**Nausea/Vomiting**
It is not unusual to feel sick the day following sleep surgery. You may even be given a prescription for nausea. If vomiting persists into late evening you may want to contact the doctor for a medication to feel better. If still vomiting the day after surgery, you need to notify the doctor.

**Medications**
Take the following medications as prescribed to you:

- **Narcotic pain medication:** Norco or Lortab (Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen) are generally prescribed to adults. This is a Narcotic medication to be used every 4-6 hours as needed for severe pain only. **This can slow breathing and worsen sleep apnea so use only if pain not controlled by other measures.** After the first few days, you should attempt to use OTC Tylenol in place of this medication. Do not exceed 4g of Tylenol in 24 hours.

- **Antibiotic:** Sometimes a penicillin antibiotic such as Amoxicillin is prescribed to be used a few days after surgery. If you are pen-allergic, you will receive a different antibiotic.

- **Carafate:** This medication is prescribed in liquid form. It is used to coat your throat to provide a soothing effect. Take as prescribed. If insurance will not cover this medication, we can call in a magic mouthwash prescription.

- **Prednisone:** A steroid taper is often prescribed to help with post-operative pain. Take as prescribed.

**For Questions or Emergency Care**
Call the office at **601-984-5160**. You may need to speak with the doctor on-call.