

# **Tonsillectomies Linked to Increased Risks of Allergies, Respiratory Illnesses, and Infectious Diseases**

An original investigation published online by the Journal of the American Medical Association's Otolaryngology-Head & Neck division finds that children who underwent tonsil and/or adenoid (the gland on the roof of the mouth that near the connection between nose and mouth) removal contend with increased risks of allergies, respiratory illnesses, and infectious diseases. Researchers conducted a review of nearly 1.2 million children where roughly 60,000 of them had tonsillectomies, adenoidectomies, or adenotonsillectomy. The children that underwent the procedure were 2 to 3 times more likely to experience upper respiratory diseases. In addition, adenoid removal resulted in a 17% higher risk of infectious disease.

When I was younger, I remember reading a Sweet Valley Twins book where the twins get their tonsils out. They were scared, but by the end of the book all fears had been assuaged and they accepted that getting your tonsils out was an easy operation, simply another cost of childhood. No one asked any questions. As an adult, I have many. What condition is serious to warrant removing a body part? Were there any other alternatives? Most importantly, what does the removal of your tonsils mean for your health long term?

## **Why do they do a tonsillectomy?**

Tonsil and adenoid removals are usually done in childhood. In fact, the adenoids typically shrink after the age of seven so later removal of them is usually not considered necessary.

Both removals are performed in response to inflammation, as enlarged adenoids and tonsils can block a child's airway. Tonsils, in particular, are associated with sore throats.

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There is a good reason that tonsils are associated with sore throats. Tonsils and adenoids are the body's first line of defense against pathogens that enter through the mouth. Doctors remove tonsils and adenoids because they're inflamed, causing sore throats...but that's what they're designed to do. The inflammation is a direct response to infection. The tonsils produce T and B cells, and the adenoids produce white blood cells to combat infection. These organs are known to perform vitally important functions in the body, yet removing them is one of the most commonly performed surgeries in childhood.

## **Alternative Treatment Options**

Many doctors are beginning to steer clear of tonsillectomies and adenoidectomies, as they're finding equal or better rates of success with antibiotics. Of course, while much better than surgery, antibiotics are problematic as well. There are other ways to get in front of a sore throat, sinus infection, or cold. Time is of the essence, so the sooner you react to the little tingle at the back of your throat indicating something is wrong, the better. Implementing these steps quickly can be the difference between a day of feeling groggy and a week of downing supplements in a valiant effort to avoid bronchitis or strep. Some of them will obviously be difficult for children. Prevention, aka diet, is really the most important, especially for kids.

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**Step One:** Lock down the diet. This is not a time to be

treating yourself. Sugar, processed foods, and dairy all feed the infection and can prolong the amount of time you need to recover. Big, diverse salads loaded with lots of chopped garlic and herbs are a must.

**Step Two:** Find (or make) a fire cider. Sip on it all day. The spicier the better. If you have a small child or if you absolutely can't take the cider without something to sweeten it up, the only option is truly raw honey. Once the honey is heated in any way, the body recognizes it as simple sugars and it feeds the infection. Pro tip: try gargling the cider, especially at the back of the throat. Here's one we like.

**Step Three:** Chew on raw garlic. Garlic should be your new best friend. For more on how great garlic is, read this article. You don't have to swallow it (especially on an empty stomach, as no one wants to puke when they potentially have a sore throat), but if you feel like you can keep it down, go for it! The longer you can chew the garlic in your mouth, the better.

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If you catch the issue in time, these three steps can be lifesavers. If you need a little extra oomph, other good natural treatments include oil of oregano, berberine in one of its many forms, slippery elm tea, cayenne in your lemonade, and in dire straits, herbal snuff (it hurts).

## Conclusion

Tonsillectomies and adenoidectomies are responses to these organs working the way they are designed to. There's a pattern of this, the removal of necessary body parts, in modern medicine, from the tonsils to the appendix to circumcision. In our effort to figure out and control our surroundings, we frequently forget to consider the whole picture. We forget how holistic health actually is.

## Sources:

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