



Uvulopalatopharyngoplasty

What is a Uvulopalatopharyngoplasty?

Uvulopalatopharyngoplasty, also known as UPPP, is a surgical procedure used to reduce obstructive sleep apnea and sometimes snoring. During the procedure, excessive tissue in the throat and palate are tightened to expand the nasal passages.

Hospital Stay

UPPP is scheduled as an in-patient surgery, meaning that you will spend the night at the hospital. The length of your hospital stay is determined by how well you are doing following surgery.

Anesthesia

UPPP is scheduled with general anesthesia. Prior to your surgery the anesthesiologist will talk with you about anesthesia and what to expect.

Risks

As with any surgery, there are not only benefits but also risks. You must keep in mind that you may not benefit from the surgery. As with any operation, there may be some unanticipated complications besides those listed here.

- A local infection may occur at the incision site. If an infection does occur, it can be easily treated with antibiotics.
- Mild to moderate bleeding, sometimes requiring additional treatment may occur.
- Although rare, postoperative effects on the soft palate could lead to temporary or permanent nasal speech, difficulty swallowing or eating certain foods, or fluid reflux through the nose while eating.

Post-operative activity

- Spend the first day resting.
- Keep the head elevated 30 to 45 degrees at all times. Maintain head elevation for one week post-operatively. Attempt to sleep with extra pillows.
- Avoid bending, straining, stooping, or lifting more than 15 pounds for a period of two weeks. Walking is allowed but don't overdo it.
- Frequent coughing or clearing of the throat should be avoided.
- Frequent sips of water will aid in clearing secretions.

Postoperative diet

Choosing a comfortable diet after tonsillectomy can be challenging. There are no absolute restrictions of types of foods. The goal is to choose non-irritating foods and encourage small frequent meals. It is very important to maintain liberal fluid intake. Staying hydrated and avoiding dehydration makes pain less and increased general comfort. Care should be taken with hot or cold liquids. These can stimulate pain in some individuals. In others, cold drinks or popsicles can be soothing. Experiment with temperature, but the safest bet is to try a lukewarm or room temperature diet. Citrus juices or tomato juice may be uncomfortable but are not harmful. Water, flat soft drinks, and apple juice are good choices.

Some suggestions for diet are as follows:

- Generally a soft diet is better tolerated. This may include the following:
 - Cooked cereals
 - Eggs
 - Mashed potatoes or other soft vegetables
 - Custards
 - Pudding
 - Jello
 - Ensure
 - Popsicles
 - Ice cream
- Salty or spicy foods or hard and crunchy foods are usually uncomfortable such as:
 - Potato chips
 - Tacos
 - Celery
 - Popcorn

Increase diet as tolerated. Your diet should return to normal in approximately two weeks. Do not be afraid to be creative with your meals.

Post-operative pain

A moderate amount of throat discomfort is expected. It peaks at day 2 or 3 then resolves over 10 to 14 days. Earaches are common after this surgery due to referred pain from the throat area. There is no cause for alarm unless pain is severe and not relieved by drinking fluids or by prescribed pain medications. Do not use aspirin or aspirin products. It is encouraged to chew sugarless gum to promote muscular activity in the throat. Gentle gargling with lukewarm saltwater (1/3 tsp salt with 1 glass water) may soothe your throat. Sucking on anesthetic lozenges or cough drops may help minimize the urge to cough or clear your throat. Early in the postoperative course it is a good idea to take the prescribed medicine before meals.

Other post-op symptoms

A white-white coating over the area of the surgery is common and no cause for alarm. It should disappear within two weeks. You can expect to have bad breath for several days. Brush teeth gently after each meal. Use lukewarm salt-water mixture described earlier as a gentle mouthwash and gargle. It may be used as often as needed and especially after meals.

Sutures

The sutures placed at the incision site do not need to be removed. After approximately 10 to 14 days they will begin to loosen and may become irritating. After a few more days they should fall out and can be swallowed.

Bleeding and fever

It is common for a small amount of blood to be mixed with the saliva. This should slowly change to clear saliva in 1-2 days following surgery. It is very important to keep the throat moist by drinking lots of fluids. If the bleeding seems to increase, try gentle gargling with ice water. If the bleeding continues, increases even more, or becomes a flow of blood, then you should go to the nearest emergency room. A slight fever of less than 101 degrees is also common for a few days following surgery. This usually controlled by taking the pain medications as instructed and by increasing your fluid intake.

Reasons for contacting the office or the doctor after hours

Call for bleeding that does not stop in 10 minutes

Signs of dehydration such as decreased urine output

High fever >102

Any question or concern (we would much rather reassure about expected outcomes than have families worry that something is not right)

Post-op appointment

A post-op appointment is necessary following surgery. Your post-op appointment will be scheduled at the time surgery is scheduled. If your post-op appointment has not been scheduled, call the office to do so.