

# Surgery for Sleep Apnea

## What to expect for your surgery:

The surgery will be performed under general anesthesia and will usually last around 1 ½ hours. You should expect to be at the facility for several hours as you may be required to remain in the recovery room for longer than normal due to the sleep apnea.

The procedure involves reconstructing your throat to support the airway and decrease the ability for structures to collapse. Often this will also involve removal of any tonsil tissue that is present.

Please make sure not to eat or drink anything after midnight the night before unless you need a small sip of water for medications on the morning of the procedure.

### Contact Info:

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# What to expect after your surgery:

Pain following the procedure is usually severe and will resolve over 1-3 weeks. Your doctor will provide you with a regimen of pain medication that will involve a narcotic pain reliever and non-narcotic pain relievers. Additionally, a steroid medication will be given to reduce inflammation and help with pain. All the medications with the exception of the steroids are purely for pain relief. Because people respond differently to pain medications, you may find that some of the medications work better for you and others are less effective. If you don't find one medication to be useful, you need not take it.


Please note that the liquid pain reliever that is provided is difficult to find in most pharmacies. Therefore, please bring your prescription card to your surgery so that you may have this medication filled at the Jefferson apothecary.

Please avoid any anti-inflammatory medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen, Motrin™, Advil™ or Naprosyn™. It is acceptable to use Tylenol™ or the prescription pain reliever provided. However, note that the pain prescription provided may contain Tylenol™ (Acetaminophen) and therefore, you should not use Tylenol™ if you are also using the prescription pain reliever.

Your physician may recommend use of aspirin rinses as an additional means of controlling pain. A separate instruction sheet will be provided with directions on how to make and use this.

Ice chips, Water ices, and popsicles may be helpful for pain management and throat swelling. These can be used routinely in the postoperative recovery.

While there are no specific dietary restrictions following the procedure, you may find that softer and more neutral foods are easier to tolerate. If you can't tolerate more solid foods, please make sure to drink adequate fluids so that you don't become dehydrated.



You may resume normal activity following the procedure as tolerated. However, please refrain from driving or operating heavy machinery if you are taking narcotic pain medications.

In the immediate postoperative period you may find that snoring and sleep apnea symptoms are temporarily worse. Typically, improvement in snoring and sleep will not be apparent for several weeks.

Sutures will be placed on the roof of your mouth following surgery. You may feel these and experience irritation in your throat as a result. These are dissolvable and while one or two may come out before your first postoperative visit, most will remain and need to be removed in the office.

**Please call the office if you experience any of the following: Excessive pain not controlled by the pain medication provided, inability to swallow liquids, difficulty breathing, throat or neck swelling, bleeding, or fever greater than 101.**

# Your First Postoperative Visit:

A postoperative visit should be scheduled around 1 week after the procedure. If one has not been previously scheduled, please call the office for an appointment. This may be arranged as a tele-health visit by computer if you prefer. The purpose of this visit is just to make sure that you are progressing normally through your recovery, that pain is being adequately managed and that you are able to tolerate a reasonable diet.

An additional visit will need to be scheduled at two weeks. At this visit, an examination of your throat will be performed and any sutures will be removed. By this time in recovery, pain should be improving but may not fully be resolved. You should try to get back to eating a more normal diet.

In the third week after surgery most people do not experience a great deal of routine pain but it is common that there will be discomfort with yawning, sneezing, or opening your mouth widely.

Another visit should be arranged for about 6 weeks postoperatively. This will allow your physician to assess how you are progressing. Additionally, at this visit, your physician will discuss when you should pursue another sleep study to assess the outcome of your surgery.

While most patients experience improvement in sleep and snoring the degree of improvement will vary. In addition with the use of alcohol or sedatives, snoring and sleep symptoms may recur. If you continue to experience significant snoring and poor sleep after your recovery, you should contact your physician to discuss.