



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice following uvulo- palato-pharyngoplasty (UPPP)

Information for patients

This leaflet is for patients who have had UPPP (operation to help snoring).

What is an uvulo-palato-pharyngoplasty (UPPP)?

This surgery involves trimming of the soft palate and removal of uvula (the dangly bit in the roof of the back of your mouth), and at the same time the surgeon will remove your tonsils (if you still have them).

Risks and complications

Your surgeon will have already discussed both the benefits and risks of the surgery with you, prior to you signing the consent form. Risks include pain, bleeding, dry throat, altered sense of taste and infection.

Advice to help with your recovery

- **Painful throat:** This type of surgery is extremely painful. Your throat is likely to be sore for up to two weeks after your operation. The first few days up to a week may be the worst. This is normal. Although your throat will be very sore, it will not affect your ability to talk. However, you may find that your speech sounds nasal. This normally corrects itself within 10 days.
- **Earache:** You may also get earache because the nerve that supplies the throat also supplies the ear. Your prescribed painkillers can be taken to relieve this. However, if the earache continues, then please visit your GP for a check-up.

We will supply painkillers for the first seven days following your operation. You need to take these regularly as prescribed, not exceeding the stated dose. If your pain is not controlled at home by your current painkillers, please contact the ENT Department (during office hours) on 01865 903 274 or the ward (out of hours) for advice. The ward may put you in touch with the on-call doctor.

Telephone numbers are at the back of this booklet.

There are local anaesthetic mouthwashes and lozenges to numb the throat that you can buy over the counter. Please ask your pharmacist for advice. (We recommend that you do not take any painkillers containing aspirin unless prescribed by your doctor.)

Food and fluids

It is very important that you eat and drink normally after your operation and do not just have soft foods. A mixture of crunchy, soft and chewy foods is best. Large swallows are less painful (i.e. eat at a normal rate). Eating and drinking normally is essential because it involves using the muscles of the throat, which improves healing, keeps the throat clean and reduces complications.

Try to drink 2-3 litres of fluids a day. Chewing gum may also help. It increases the production of saliva and encourages swallowing.

It is normal when drinking for the first time for fluid to come out of the front of your nose. This rarely continues and almost always settles down after 1-2 weeks. It is due to the soft palate being slightly shorter and less mobile for the first few days following the operation.

Possible complications

Infection is recognised by bad breath, coated tongue, feeling feverish and unwell; or/and an increased pain in your throat not controlled by your current painkillers. If you experience these, please contact the ENT Outpatient department (during office hours) or the ward (out of hours) for advice as you may have an infection which can be treated with antibiotics. The ward may put you in touch with the on-call doctor.

Bleeding is recognised by blood in the mouth. If you notice bleeding from your mouth or throat, please go to the Emergency Department (A&E). Bleeding may be due to an infection and you may need to be readmitted.

Returning to work: You may need to take two weeks off work. However, it may take about a month to feel completely well again. You may need a sick certificate for your employer; please ask your doctor

or nurse for this before you leave hospital. We recommend you spend the first week resting at home and slowly increase your activity as you feel able.

Follow up: You will not need any follow-up appointments.

Stitches: You may have some stitches. These are soluble and usually dissolve within a few days.

Snoring: You may continue to snore – do not be alarmed. It will take a few days for the swollen tissues to settle down.

Advice to follow for two weeks after your surgery:

- Keep away from people with coughs and colds. Avoid public places, e.g. supermarkets.
- Avoid smoky or dusty environment as this can irritate your throat.
- Avoid smoking as it may make your throat sore and cause infection.
- Avoid alcohol as it affects the clotting of the blood, which makes you more prone to bleeding.
- Avoid taking aspirin as this has the same effect as alcohol. You need to take the prescribed pain relief.
- Brush your teeth regularly, especially after meals.
- Gargling with warm salt water can help.
- Eat and drink normally.

Contact us

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| • Dorrell Ward 0118 322 7172 | ENT appointments (CAT 1) |
| • ENT Outpatient Department | 0118 322 7139 |
| 01865 903 274 | Email: rbbh-tr.cat1@nhs.net |

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.