Tonsils and adenoids provide a first line of defense as part of the body’s immune system. They function much like lymph nodes or glands found in the neck, armpits, and groin. Because they are located at the back of the throat (tonsils) and high in the throat behind the nose (adenoids), they can interfere with breathing when enlarged – often due to repeated infections.

A tonsillectomy or removal of the tonsils may be done to treat:
- Recurring or severely infected tonsils called tonsillitis
- Infection behind the tonsils called a peritonsillar abscess
- Breathing problems due to enlargement, which blocks air flow
- Rare diseases of the tonsils such as cancer

An adenoidectomy or removal of the adenoids may be used to treat:
- Chronic infection of the adenoids, which can lead to:
  - repeated ear infections
  - or a buildup of fluid in the ears, which can affect hearing
- Breathing problems due to enlargement, which blocks airflow through the nose

If both a tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy are needed, they will be done during the same surgery. Sometimes only one of the surgeries is needed.

Preparing for Surgery
- You will be asked about:
  - What medication you take including over-the-counter medicines, herbal preparations, and supplements
  - Any allergies to medications and your reactions to them
  - Past problems with anesthesia
  - Personal or family history of bleeding disorders
Preparing for Surgery (continued)
- For at least 2 weeks, do not take any aspirin or other medications that contain aspirin. Your doctor may tell you to stop taking other medications that may increase bleeding.
- You may have blood tests or need to see your primary care doctor before surgery.
- You will be given specific instructions on when to stop eating and drinking fluids before your surgery – usually nothing to eat or drink after midnight.
- Talk to your doctor about what medications to take the morning of surgery.

Surgery and Recovery
Your surgery will be done under general anesthesia so you will be “asleep” during it. In most cases, you will be able to go home later that day.
- Pain – It is normal to have pain after surgery. It is most often in the throat, but may be in the ears, neck, or jaw. Take pain medication as instructed.
- Fluids – Drink plenty of fluids after surgery. Water and popsicles are good choices. You need to stay well hydrated as you recover.
- Food – When you are able to eat, start with bland foods that are easy to swallow such as applesauce, pudding and broth. Avoid spicy, hard, or crunchy foods.
- Things to avoid – Do not use a straw or blow your nose. If you need to sneeze, open your mouth so you don’t sneeze through your nose.
- Activity – Rest and avoid strenuous activities such as bike riding and running for several days after surgery. Talk to your doctor about other specific exercises and activities.
- Snoring – Noisy breathing is common during the first week or two of recovery.
- Recovery Period – The recovery period is 14 days. This is the amount of time it takes the area where surgery was done to heal.

When to Call Your Doctor or Seek Emergency Care:
- Call your doctor if you have:
  - a fever over 101°F
  - bright red bleeding that lasts more than a few minutes
- Call 911 if you have:
  - trouble breathing
  - a large amount of bleeding

Talk to your doctor about any questions or concerns.