

Dear Family,

In school, your child has been learning critical reading, writing, health, and science skills, while increasing his or her understanding of what healthy tonsils do and how they look. Enlarged tonsils have been found to cause a condition known as **sleep-disordered breathing** (SDB). Medical research has identified the connection between SDB and substantial childhood health problems, behavior difficulties, and hindered learning and physical growth.¹ Recognizing symptoms of problems caused by enlarged tonsils is important for your child's health. You'll find valuable new information you can use in these family pages, developed by Scholastic and generously sponsored by **TonsilFacts.com**. On the reverse of this page, you will find information and guidance you can use in speaking with your family physician about enlarged tonsils, along with information on effective solutions.

Tonsil Basics

- ▶ Children are born with two tonsils, one on each side of the back of the mouth.
- ▶ Healthy tonsils are pink and oval in shape.
- ▶ Scientists believe that tonsils work as part of the body's immune system by filtering

germs that attempt to invade the body, and that they help to develop antibodies to germs. This happens primarily during the first few years of life, becoming less important as we get older.²

Tonsil Problems

- ▶ **Enlarged tonsils** can partially block the throat and breathing passage.³ This condition can create breathing problems that may cause sleep-disordered breathing, which can lead to other health and behavior problems.⁴

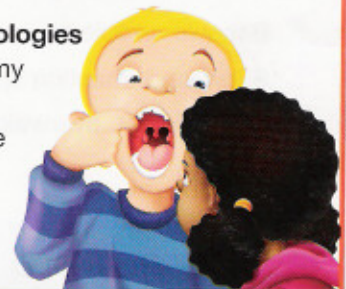
- ▶ **Symptoms** of sleep-disordered breathing include snoring, restless sleep, breathing pauses, and, in some cases, sleep apnea.⁵ During the day, children may be tired, moody, and inattentive.⁵

- ▶ **Tonsillitis** is an infection in the tonsils.

Tonsillectomy

- ▶ **Tonsillectomy** is the removal of the tonsils. 75% of tonsillectomies are done to remove enlarged tonsils.⁷
- ▶ Enlarged tonsils are the most common cause for SDB; thus tonsillectomy is an effective treatment for pediatric sleep-disordered breathing.⁸

- ▶ **Advanced technologies** make tonsillectomy significantly less painful, with more rapid healing of the tonsils.⁹



Learn more about tonsils and tonsillectomy at **TonsilFacts.com/school**

Sources: 1) and 4) National Center on Sleep Disorders Research (part of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute and the National Institutes of Health), "National Sleep Disorders Research Plan, Section 5: Sleep Disorders," www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/prot/sleep/res_plan/section5/section5a.html 2) American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery, "Patient Health Info: Tonsils and Adenoids," www.entnet.org/healthinfo/throat/tonsils.cfm 3) Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford, "Respiratory Disorders: Obstructive Sleep Apnea," www.lpch.org/DiseaseHealthInfo/HealthLibrary/resp/resp/apnea.html 5) The Cleveland Clinic, "Sleep-Disordered Breathing," www.clevelandclinicmeded.com/diseasemanagement/pulmonary/sleep/sleep.htm 6), 7), and 8) American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery, Kids ENT Health, "Pediatric Obstructive Sleep Apnea," www.entnet.org/KidsENT/apnea.cfm 9) R.H. Temple, M.S. Timms, "Paediatric Coblation Tonsillectomy," *International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology*, 61 (2001), pp. 195–196. Note: All online sources are ensured to be accurate as of the printing of this information.

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Tonsil Checklist: Talking with the Doctor

Watch for these symptoms of enlarged tonsils and tonsil-related health problems. Call your family doctor at the first sign of tonsil problems. Fill out this page and take it with you when you visit the doctor.

Child's Name: _____

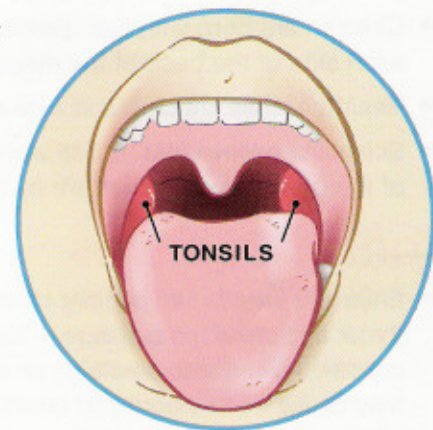
Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Age: ____ Sex: ____

Check off any symptoms that your child has below:

- Loud and/or labored breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Frequent and disruptive gasping or snorting noises
- 7 episodes of tonsillitis in one year
- 5 episodes of tonsillitis per year for two years in a row
- 3 episodes of tonsillitis per year for three years in a row

If your child is younger than 5:

- Gasping for air while sleeping
- Breathing stops while sleeping
- Breathing through the mouth while sleeping
- Regularly waking up in the middle of the night
- Restlessness
- Snoring



If your child is older than 5:

- Bed-wetting at night
- Behavior problems
- Shortened attention span
- Underweight, overweight, or experiencing abnormal appetite for his/her age
- Snoring

Learn More and Find a Doctor

If your child needs his or her tonsils removed, you'll probably need to see an otolaryngologist or ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) surgeon. Visit TonsilFacts.com/school to learn more about tonsils and to find an ENT with experience in advanced tonsillectomy procedures that can make recovery quicker and less painful for children.

TonsilFacts.com is an educational resource for parents seeking information about childhood sleep disorders, tonsil and adenoid disease, and tonsillectomy surgical options. The site is maintained by Vital Signs LLC, a medical communications agency specializing in patient education, and Jay N. Dolitsky, MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Otolaryngology at New York Medical College. **TonsilFacts.com** is made possible by educational grants from the health care industry.

Source: TonsilFacts.com, "Tonsillectomy Discussion Guide," www.tonsilfacts.com/pdf/tonsillectomy_discussion_guide.pdf
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