



# Optimized Recovery Initiative: Minimizing Stay without Compromising Safety

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## Background

- Pediatric patients admitted overnight after Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy (T&A) are at higher risk of desaturation events due to the surgical site being close to the airway.
- In 2024, our pediatric hospital reported an average post-T&A length of stay (LOS) of 25.5 hours.

## Objective

- The purpose of this quality improvement project was to reduce the LOS for post-operative T&A patients while maintaining safe discharge practices and enhancing caregiver satisfaction.

## Opportunities

- Decadron dosage delays
- Patient inadequate oral fluid intake
- Post-surgical pain
- Overnight oxygen requirement needs
- Family concerns

## Methods

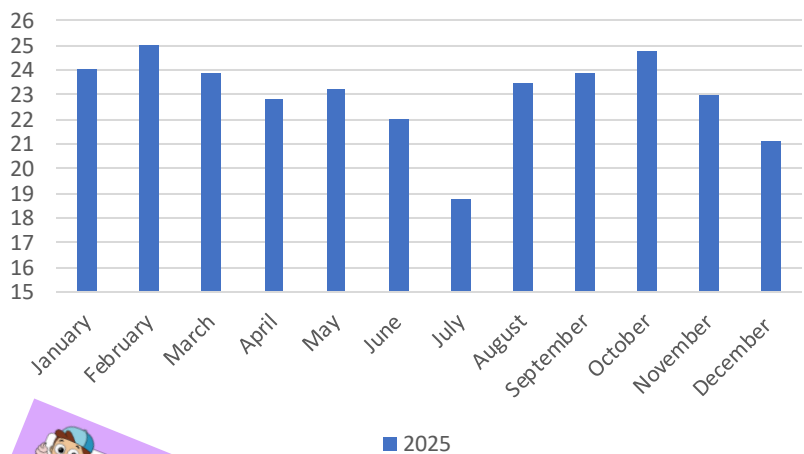
- An interprofessional team, including COU nurses, nurse leaders, ENT specialists, case management, utilization review, and hospitalists, reviewed delays to optimize processes.
- Patients were planned for discharge in advance and discharged by 7 am the next morning.
- Families were engaged early in the recovery process and received clear, consistent information about discharge goals, which helped them feel prepared and reassured at discharge.

## Outcomes

- The LOS was decreased by 10% to 22.9975 hours in 2025.
- This outcome highlights the effectiveness of interprofessional collaboration and structured discharge planning in improving patient throughput and satisfaction with the discharge process.

## Results

Post-operative T&A LOS



### What to expect after your child's Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy

#### Pain

Pain is expected for 10-14 days following surgery. Give Tylenol every four hours for 24-48 hours on a scheduled basis. When your child's pain decreases, Opioid Decadron is also ordered to help decrease the inflammation. It should be taken every other day starting the first day after surgery.

#### Nausea/Vomiting

After general anesthesia, it is very common to have nausea and vomiting within 12-24 hours following surgery. If nausea and vomiting persists for more than 24-48 hours, call the listed office number.

#### Bleeding

Mild bleeding, such as blood-tinged nasal drainage or saliva, is expected. Bleeding from the incision sites can occur up to 2-3 weeks after surgery. Signs include **EXCESSIVE BLEEDING, ALLOWING COUGHING BLOOD, VOMITING BLOOD, ETC.** If your child has any of these symptoms, please proceed to the Nicklaus Children's Hospital Emergency Department.

### What to expect after your child's Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy

#### Nasal Reflux/Congestion

Nasal reflux is the small amount of mucus from the nose that typically follows surgery when the throat has healed.

#### Fever

Low-grade fever is normal for a few days following surgery. However, if the fever is above 102, contact your provider's office nurse.

#### Diet

It is normal for your child to lose weight during two weeks following surgery. However, it is important to encourage soft foods, water, juice, popsicles, yogurt, etc. Avoid citrus berries or orange juice and dairy foods (candy, pasta, chips, etc.) Avoid red foods so they're not confused with blood. Swallowing blood is also a common following surgery.

## References

