

Glossectomy

What is Glossectomy?

This is a surgery to remove disease from the tongue.

There are different amounts of tongue tissue that may be described as:

- **Partial Glossectomy**-removal of less than half of your tongue
- **Total Glossectomy**- removal of nearly all or most of your tongue

It may be necessary to repair your tongue with tissue from somewhere else on your body.

What to expect after surgery

Diet

Eating and drinking may be a problem. You may need a small feeding tube placed in your nose during surgery to use for nutrition. This will be removed when you are allowed to eat and drink by mouth. A swallow therapist will help you during this transition period.

Oral care

You may have had some teeth pulled to prevent food from getting stuck in your mouth.

A mouth wash may be prescribed to keep your mouth clean and to prevent infection. You will need to make sure that food and debris are not trapped in your mouth. After you eat and drink you will need to rinse your mouth with water to clean it.

Pain control

Pain medication will be prescribed. It may be in a liquid form to make it easier to swallow. This may cause some constipation and require a stool softener.

Speech

You may sound differently depending on how much of your tongue has been removed. You may not be able to talk if all of your tongue was removed. You may need to work with a speech therapist to help improve your communication.

Activities

Do not do any strenuous exercise for the first week. Resume your activities slowly over the next few weeks. Do not lift anything over 25 lbs for the first 2 weeks.

When to call the doctor

- Increased pain in tongue, neck or face
- A fever over 102° regardless of the method used to take temperature
- Worsening or changes in the way your breath smells or mouth tastes
- Pus like drainage from the tongue
- Change in color of tissue (white, black, gray)
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Phone numbers:

The Otolaryngology (ENT) Clinic phone number is **(608) 263-6190**.

Monday through Friday between 8a.m. and 5 p.m. your call will be answered by a receptionist that will take a message and send it to the nurse. After 5:00 p.m. or the weekends, the clinic number is answered by the paging operator. Ask for the ENT doctor on call. Leave your contact information and the doctor will return you call. If you live out of the area, please call **1-800-323-8942**.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2017 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#7557