

Information for Patients

Adenoids are lumps of tissue at the back of a child's throat. They may occasionally need to be removed at the same time as an operation to help relieve a condition called glue ear, where the middle ear becomes filled with sticky fluid. In this operation, tubes to drain fluid from the middle ear (grommets) are inserted into the ear. However, for most children, removing their adenoids during the glue ear operation may cause more harm than good.

About the condition

Adenoids are usually only present in children. They reach their largest size between the ages of 3-5 years old and then they slowly shrink away. Sometimes adenoids become large and inflamed and this may contribute to glue ear. Glue ear can affect a child's hearing. Adenoids may also cause other symptoms such as frequent congestion in the nose. If a child has certain other persistent symptoms as well as glue ear, then it may benefit them to remove their adenoids during the same operation as inserting the grommets.

What are the **BENEFITS** of the procedure?

Most children do not need their adenoids removed when grommets are inserted. However, in a few cases, removing the adenoids may help to improve certain symptoms.

What are the **RISKS**?

Removing adenoids is generally considered to be a low risk procedure. However, risks include damage to teeth, lips or gums, bleeding or very rarely changes in speech. There are also risks because of the slightly increased time it takes to remove the adenoids during the operation to insert the grommets.

What are the **ALTERNATIVES**?

Grommets can be inserted without removing a child's adenoids. There is no long-term difference in the hearing ability of children who do not have their adenoids removed compared to those who have them removed while grommets are inserted. You can discuss any questions you may have with your child's doctor to help you make a decision.

What if you do **NOTHING**?

Adenoids tend to shrink after the ages of 3-5 years old. Any contribution of the adenoids to a child's glue ear or hearing should resolve naturally as they grow up.

For more information see [Adenoidectomy - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

You can find out more about the [Evidence Based Interventions](#) programme online