Coblation® Tonsillectomy
Backgrounder

According to the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS), tonsillectomies and adenoidectomies (or adenotonsillectomies) are the second most common operation performed on children. Approximately 600,000 tonsillectomies are performed annually on children and adults. Introduced in 2001, Coblation® Tonsillectomy is rapidly becoming the standard of care with more than 20 percent of tonsillectomies now performed using the procedure.

Many conventional tonsillectomy devices (such as electrocautery and scalpels) burn or cut tonsil tissue, and can cause heavy bleeding and extensive pain for the patient. With Coblation Tonsillectomy, children in clinical studies have been shown to experience less pain and recover more quickly than those who received traditional tonsillectomies.[1]

The Technology

Coblation Tonsillectomy utilizes a unique, low-temperature technology that has been clinically shown to speed a child's return to normal activity and diet, and decrease pain, post-surgical narcotics use and the chance of rebleeding when compared to older, heat-based technologies such as electrocautery.[1,2] By combining radiofrequency energy with a saline solution, Coblation is able to gently and precisely remove tonsils without damaging surrounding healthy tissue.

Since its introduction in 1997, Coblation has been used in more than 2 million surgical procedures worldwide in a variety of arthroscopic, spinal and dermatological surgical applications. Cleared by the FDA in July 2001 for tonsillectomy, surgeons have performed more than 500,000 Coblation Tonsillectomy procedures around the globe.

Patient Benefits

Results of clinical studies confirm that children whose tonsils were removed by the Coblation Tonsillectomy procedure experienced less pain and recovered more quickly — including returning to a normal diet in half the amount of time — than those who underwent other surgical techniques.[1]

Instead of the prolonged recovery period (up to two weeks) common with other tonsillectomy methods, studies have shown that Coblation patients are back to their normal diet more quickly, in 2.4 days versus 7.6 days on average[2], reducing the risk of dehydration and rapid weight loss.

Coblation Tonsillectomy typically takes about 20 minutes to perform and has a lower incidence of post-operative complications versus conventional tonsillectomy procedures. According to one published study, doctors received 59 percent fewer patient calls or visits for complications during days one through 14 post-surgery with Coblation Tonsillectomy versus tonsillectomy with electrocautery[3].

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[1] Temple RH, Timms MS. Paediatric Coblation Tonsillectomy. *International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology, 2001; 61: 195-198.*

[2] Stoker KE, Don DM, Kang DR, et al. Pediatric total tonsillectomy using Coblation compared to conventional electrosurgery: a prospective, controlled single-blind study. *Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg*. 2004;130(6):666-675.

[3] Walner, D, *Pediatric Tonsillectomy: Coblation vs. Electrocautery*, Abstract for the Scientific Program at the American Academy of Otolaryngology (AAO), New York, NY, September 20-23, 2005.