

Adenoids are lymph glands, located at the back of the nose where the air passages join those of the back of the mouth.

The lymph system is the body's defence against infection and the lymph glands (like the adenoids) are full of infection-fighting cells. Any infection breathed in is filtered through the adenoids and usually killed. However this is not always the case.

### What to look for...

Adenoid-related problems produce symptoms in the ears, nose, and throat. Most common in children between 4 and 8 years old. Any of the following may be indicative of adenoid problems:

- Interruption of normal breathing patterns during the night
- snoring
- nasal voice
- dry throat due to breathing through the mouth - continually asking for drinks
- secretions from the nose during the day combined with a cough at night, caused by sinus drainage
- recurring ear infections
- coughs from increased pus or discharge in back of throat; a collection of this may cause morning vomiting.
- Chest infections may occur

The adenoids, play a special role during childhood... By making antibodies, they help the young child's body fight respiratory tract infections.

From the time your child is three until around the age of seven, the adenoids grow so that they can give extra protection to the lungs and chest. After about the age of eight, they usually begin to disappear until adolescence when they have usually gone.

You may have grown up in an era when removing the adenoids and tonsils was standard practice and may have undergone one of these procedures yourself. But because doctors now understand more clearly the role of the adenoids in fighting infection, the chances of your child's undergoing an adenoidectomy are much more remote... usually limited to the most severe cases.

### Causes

The primary reason for chronic adenoid problems is structural... The adenoids grow so large that they block the nasal passages. But infection or irritation, perhaps caused by allergies, can also cause problems by making the adenoids swell. Usually a younger child is more exposed to infections.

#### Traditional Treatment

Adenoid problems are difficult to diagnose because the symptoms can point to any number of conditions and it is hard to tell even by examination if enlarged adenoids are the cause.

Three types of medicines may help in treating adenoids

1. **Decongestants** - available over the counter
2. **Antihistamines** - available over the counter
3. **Antibiotics** - available only on prescription.

As a last resort if the above medications have not helped and alternative therapies have not helped the adenoids may be removed by a surgeon .

Consult your doctor before undertaking any medication for the ailment.

### Alternative/Natural Treatments

Alternative therapists usually seek an allergy-related cause first. Always take your child to a professional for evaluation and treatment... At-home care can only alleviate the symptoms. Natural therapists will also seek to strengthen the immune system with a natural, wholefood diet enriched with Vitamin C.

- **Herbal Treatments** - Echinacea is believed to help fight infection. (Get professional advice for appropriate dosages). Garlic is often helpful as well as other herb cleavers sometimes in combination with Echinacea to fight infection and inflammation in the lymphatic system.
- **Homoeopathic Remedies** - You should get professional advice for remedies appropriate to the condition as well as to yourself.

The following at home remedies may alleviate some symptoms, but they will not clear up the underlying condition. **Always seek help from a professional when your child has a chronic problem.**

- For children with allergies, reducing or eliminating environmental irritants can make your child more comfortable. Using a vaporiser may aid the condition

- A humidifier may help a congested child.
- An over-the-counter decongestant may temporarily alleviate stuffiness.

### **Dietary Considerations**

Because chronic adenoid problems give rise to other problems, you should consult a Health Professional for remedies and diets appropriate to the condition as well as to your child. Your Pharmacist will monitor your child's progress and change remedies if they do not bring relief in a short time.

### **When to Seek Further Professional Advice**

Left untreated, enlarged adenoids can lead to chronic sinusitis, and in severe cases, a complaint in which the child stops breathing for seconds at a time during the night.

If your child is not breathing properly at night, you notice your child has breathing problems or breathing through their mouth and if you notice recurrent ear conditions and infections.