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## Strep Throat Again? Tonsils May Be Key

Removing Tonsils May Make Kids Less Likely to Get Strep Throat Again

by Miranda Hitti, WebMD Medical News

Children who have their tonsils removed after having strep throat may be less likely to get strep throat again," say Mayo Clinic doctors including Laura Orvidas, MD.

Tonsillectomy (surgery to remove tonsils) may be a "useful therapy for treating children" with recurrent strep throat, write Orvidas and colleagues in *Laryngology*. They note that strep throat is one of the most commonly diagnosed childhood illnesses, sending about 18 million kids to doctors every year. Tonsillectomy should reduce throat infections and "therefore diminish the number of missed school days and hopefully improve overall quality of life," Orvidas says in a Mayo Clinic news release.



hadn't gotten tonsillectomy were three times more likely to get strep throat again before their 16th birthday. They were also more likely to get strep throat sooner, and more often, than the children who got tonsillectomy.

### Strep Throat Statistics

About half of the kids who got tonsillectomy had strep throat at least once -- four years after tonsillectomy but before turning 16 -- compared with 84% of those who didn't get tonsillectomy.

On average, strep throat returned about a year after tonsillectomy -- four months later than its average recurrence without tonsillectomy. During the follow-up period, strep throat returned once, on average, after tonsillectomy, compared to nearly three times without tonsillectomy.

"Our study showed a low complication rate for tonsillectomy as well, with less than 2% of patients requiring a return to the operating room," the researchers write. But surgery can have complications, so the researchers call for more studies to weigh tonsillectomy's risks and benefits in treating recurrent strep throat.

### Strep Throat Study

Orvidas and colleagues studied the medical records of 290 children aged 4-15. The kids had had strep throat three or more times in a year while living in Olmstead County, Minn., from 1994 to 1998.

After their repeated bouts with strep throat, 145 kids got tonsillectomy. The other 145 didn't undergo tonsillectomy. The researchers didn't ask any of the kids to get tonsillectomy. Each family made its decision to get (or skip) tonsillectomy on its own.

Orvidas and colleagues checked the kids' medical records for the next four years, on average. During that time, the children who

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## Motivational Thought

*Did is a word of achievement*

*Won't is a word of rebellion.*

*Might is a word of mediocrity*

*Can't is a word of defeat and fear.*

*Ought is a word of duty*

*Try is a word of little faith*

*Maybe is a word of procrastination*

*Will is a word of courage*

*Can is a word of power and self-determination*

*Doing is a word of progress and fulfillment*

*Done is a word of success.*

## Ménière's Disease

Meniere's disease (pronounced "men-years") can be quite debilitating for those that suffer from it. It can cause sudden attacks of vertigo (spinning), tinnitus (ringing in the ears), fluctuating hearing loss and a sensation of pressure or fullness in the ear.



Although the exact cause of Meniere's disease is unknown, it is believed to involve an imbalance of the fluids in the inner ear, which causes excess pressure. This pressure affects the sensory systems in the inner ear which help maintain your balance.

Treatment options for Meniere's include avoiding caffeine, alcohol and eating a low-sodium diet (sodium causes the body to retain excess fluid). The typical U.S. diet includes about 4,000 mg of sodium per day, but restricting sodium intake to 1,000 mg per day may help reduce the severity of the episodes. In extreme cases, surgery can destroy the balance center in the inner ear.

## I Am the New Year

### I AM THE NEW YEAR.

I am unused, unspotted, without blemish,  
I stretch before you three hundred  
and sixty-five days long.  
I will present each day in its turn,  
a new leaf in the book of life,  
for you to place upon it your imprint.



### I AM THE NEW YEAR.

Each hour of every day,  
I will give you sixty minutes  
that have never known the use of man.  
White and pure I present them;  
It remains for you to fill them  
with sixty jeweled seconds of  
love, hope, endeavor and patience.

### I AM THE NEW YEAR.

I am coming --  
but once past, I can  
never be recalled.  
Make me your best!



## Severe Sleep Apnea Raises Risk of Stroke in the Elderly

*courtesy of The Sleep Report*

As recently reported by the American Heart Association and on Forbes.com, a team of Spanish researchers have concluded that elderly people with sleep apnea face more than twice the risk of stroke than people with mild sleep apnea or none. "This study provides more evidence that severe sleep apnea represents an independent risk factor for stroke in the elderly population," said Roberto Munoz, MD, lead author of the study.



Earlier studies of stroke and sleep apnea focused on middle-aged people, but the greatest incidence of stroke is in older people, said Munoz, a neurologist at the Hospital de Navarra in Pamplona, Spain.

The researchers used data from 394 people, 70 to 100 years old (average age 77, with 57% being male) who participated in the Vitoria Sleep Project in Vitoria, Spain. The project involved interviewing participants about general personal data such as height, weight, body mass index, neck circumference and use of medications for hyperten-

sion, diabetes and cholesterol. Researchers then monitored patients' breathing patterns overnight in a sleep study.

The team tracked medical events in the patients for 6 years, registering 20 ischemic strokes. Those who suffered from strokes were more likely to be male and to have more severe sleep apnea. Patients with severe sleep apnea had two-and-a-half times greater risk of suffering a stroke during the study than patients with no apnea, mild apnea or moderate apnea, Munoz said.

"Snoring is the most important warning sign for sleep apnea," Munoz said. "People who live alone, which is common in the elderly, should be aware that excessive daytime sleepiness is another key risk factor."

**If you think you, or someone you love may have sleep apnea, call the Tritt Breathe and Sleep Center today! We offer ApneaLink, a \$20 in-home screening tool that helps evaluate your risk.**

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