

What is an adenoidectomy?

An adenoidectomy is an operation to remove the adenoids – small lumps of tissue at the back of the nose, above the roof of the mouth. Adenoids are part of the immune system, which helps fight infection and protects the body from bacteria and viruses. Adenoids are only present in children.

They start to grow from birth and are biggest when the child is approximately three to five years old. But by age seven to eight they start to shrink and by the late teens, are barely visible. By adulthood, the adenoids will have disappeared completely. The adenoids disappear because although they may be helpful in young children, they are not an essential part of an adult's immune system. Alternatives to having an operation include:

- nasal saline irrigation
- nasal steroid spray or drops
- over the counter painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen
- antibiotics if a non-viral infection is suspected.

Patient eligibility criteria:

An adenoidectomy will only be offered in cases where there has been no response to all other suggested treatments and therapies after an appropriate trial. In those cases, diagnosis must be confirmed by imaging (radiology).

Children or adults with sleep disordered breathing or patients who hold their breath whilst sleeping (apnoea) confirmed with sleep studies, will be offered an adenoidectomy procedure in line with recognised management of these conditions.

The clinician in charge of the care of the patient's specific condition, usually a hospital doctor, can assist the application, if there is exceptional clinical need for the treatment to be funded. The patient's clinician must evidence clinical exceptionality and must be supported by the patient's local NHS commissioning organisation. See separate leaflet for more information on Individual Funding Requests (IFRs).

Advice and further guidance:



For more information search for 'adenoidectomy' at www.nhs.uk

Treatment policy for patients covered by NHS Solihull, Birmingham CrossCity and Birmingham South Central Clinical Commissioning Groups.