



Timothy Thomason, M.D.

Constance Zhou, M.D.

(972)253-4280

SURGERY FOR SLEEP APNEA--UPPP

What are the benefits of UPPP?

UPPP (abbreviated for uvulopalatopharyngoplasty) is performed to address the obstruction in the throat that involves the soft palate. The result of the surgery is that the soft palate is shorter and slightly stiffer so that it cannot fall back and obstruct the throat during sleep.

How is UPPP performed?

The surgery is performed under general anesthesia in the operating room. A preoperative assessment will be done by your physician that may include lab work, an EKG, and a chest x-ray. Do not take aspirin or ibuprofen for 7 days prior to surgery unless you are required to take this for medical reasons. Be sure that your doctor is aware if you take any blood thinners such as Plavix, aspirin, or coumadin. ***You may not eat or drink anything after midnight prior to surgery.*** The surgery is performed in the hospital and will require an overnight stay. Usually patients go home the morning after surgery.

After you are asleep in the operating room, the surgeon will remove the tonsils unless they have already been removed. Dr. Thomason/ Dr. Zhou uses Coblation technology for the cutting so that there is less pain during recovery. Next a small rim of tissue on the back edge of the soft palate is trimmed. The uvula (midline muscle that hangs down from the palate) is shortened. The incisions are closed with absorbable sutures.

What should I expect after surgery?

There will be moderate pain and swelling after surgery. You will have discomfort with swallowing so it is best to eat soft foods and drink a lot of fluids for the first 1-2 weeks. You may be ready to return to light-duty work in 5-7 days but you must avoid strenuous activity and heavy lifting for 2 weeks. You will have a follow-up appointment usually one week after surgery.

What are the possible complications?

UPPP is commonly performed and is generally very safe. As with all surgery, there are risks to consider. The risks include bleeding, difficulty with speech, difficulty with swallowing, or altered taste sensation. Bleeding can happen during the first two weeks after surgery. If this happens you should notify Dr. Thomason /Dr. Zhou usually comes to the emergency room for evaluation. During the first few weeks there is commonly some difficulty with speech and swallowing, mainly due to discomfort in the throat. It is possible to have insufficiency of the palate that causes air or food to leak into the nose when talking or eating. If this



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happens it is usually temporary and resolves spontaneously with time. It is rare to have any permanent impairment. The taste sensation may be altered during the first one or two weeks and there may be bad breath during this time. This most often resolves spontaneously as well.

When should I call my surgeon?

Notify your surgeon immediately if you have:

- Bleeding from the throat or vomiting up blood
- uncontrolled pain
- nausea and vomiting that lasts more than eight hours
- any other concerns