



Dr Wolfgang Muller (Consultant Paediatrician)

Parent Information Guide: Tonsillar Stones in Children

What Are Tonsillar Stones?

Tonsillar stones (also called **tonsilloliths**) are **small, hard lumps** that form in the grooves (called crypts) of the tonsils. They are made up of **trapped food, dead cells, saliva, and bacteria**. These materials can harden (calcify) over time.

They are usually **harmless**, but can sometimes cause:

- Bad breath (halitosis)
- Throat discomfort
- A feeling of something stuck in the throat
- Small white or yellow lumps at the back of the throat

Are Tonsillar Stones Dangerous?

No — they are usually **not dangerous** and don't lead to serious health problems. Some children may have them occasionally and not even notice.

What Causes Them?

- Deep crevices in the tonsils
- Poor oral hygiene
- Repeated throat or tonsil infections
- Dry mouth or dehydration

How Can I Help My Child at Home?

You can try the following **safe home remedies**:

✅ **Encourage regular gargling** with warm salt water, especially after meals. This helps dislodge stones and prevent new ones from forming.



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✅ **Maintain good oral hygiene:**

- Brush teeth and tongue twice a day
- Floss daily
- Drink plenty of water

✅ **Monitor for signs of discomfort**, bad breath, or visible stones.

❌ Do not try to remove stones with sharp objects. If trying gentle removal, use a clean cotton swab or soft tool only when stones are clearly visible and the child is calm.

When Should I See a Doctor?

Speak to your GP or an ENT specialist if your child:

- Has **recurrent or painful tonsillar stones**
 - Complains of **persistent bad breath**
 - Has frequent sore throats or tonsillitis
 - Has trouble swallowing or complains of ear pain
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Medical and Specialist Options

- **Antibiotics** – may be used if there's an infection
 - **Tonsil lavage or suctioning** – cleaning by a doctor
 - **Tonsil cryptolysis** – smoothing the tonsil surface to stop stones forming
 - **Tonsillectomy (removal of tonsils)** – rarely needed, but may be considered for severe or ongoing problems
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Key Points to Remember

- Tonsillar stones are **common and usually not harmful**
- Good oral hygiene and hydration can help prevent them
- See a doctor if they become a **regular problem** or cause discomfort

For more information, speak with your child's GP or an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) specialist.



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