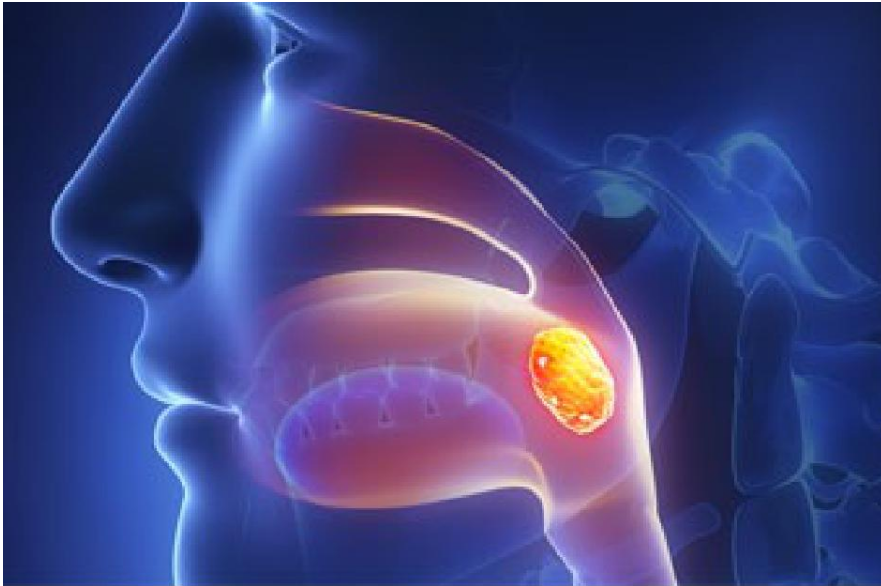




## Tonsil Stones (Tonsilloliths)



### Overview

This condition, which is most common in people who have chronic tonsil infections, is a hardened buildup of debris in the pockets of the tonsils. Tonsil stones are not usually harmful. People who have them are often not aware of them.

### Causes

Your tonsils are spongy masses of disease-fighting lymphatic tissue on both sides of your throat. The surface of each tonsil is marked with holes and depressions. Mucus, dead cells, food particles and bacteria can become trapped within these holes. Over time, this debris hardens to form stones.

### Symptoms

A tonsil stone may be visible as a small white spot on your tonsil. You may have more than one stone, and they may be found in one or both tonsils. Your tonsils may be swollen, and your throat may be sore. You may have difficulty swallowing. Tonsil stones can also cause bad breath, and a painful sensation in your ear.

### Treatment

In many cases, tonsil stones can be carefully dislodged at home. Gargling with saltwater can help keep them from recurring. If you have very large or very painful stones, a doctor may need to remove them.