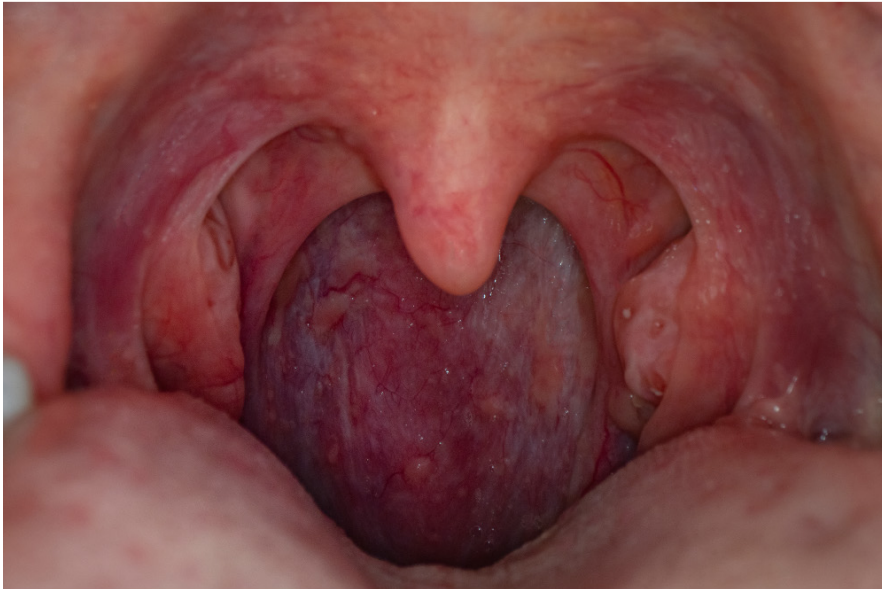




What Do the Tonsils Do?



Overview

Your tonsils are two lumps of tissue at the back of your throat. They're part of your immune system. But what do they do, exactly? Let's take a moment to learn more.

Healthy tonsils

Tonsils are found on both sides of the back of your throat. Tonsils can vary in size from person to person, but in general each one is about the size of a large olive. You can see your tonsils in your throat if you open your mouth wide.

The tonsils' role

The tonsils' role is to help your body fight germs that enter through your mouth and nose. Your tonsils trap these germs. Then, immune cells within the tonsils kill the germs before they have a chance to spread to other parts of your body and cause a serious infection.

When tonsils become a problem

Sometimes, your tonsils become infected by germs, and this infection lasts a long time or comes back again and again. We call this a "chronic" infection. This makes your tonsils swollen and sore. If you have this problem, you may benefit from a surgery called a "tonsillectomy." That's when we remove your tonsils. After the surgery, you won't have any more tonsil infections. And, if they were enlarged, it may help you breathe easier (especially when you're sleeping). And don't worry, your immune system will still do a good job fighting germs even without your tonsils. For more info, talk to your doctor.