

Scurvy After Surgery: A Rare Cause of Delayed Bleeding in Pediatric Tonsillectomy

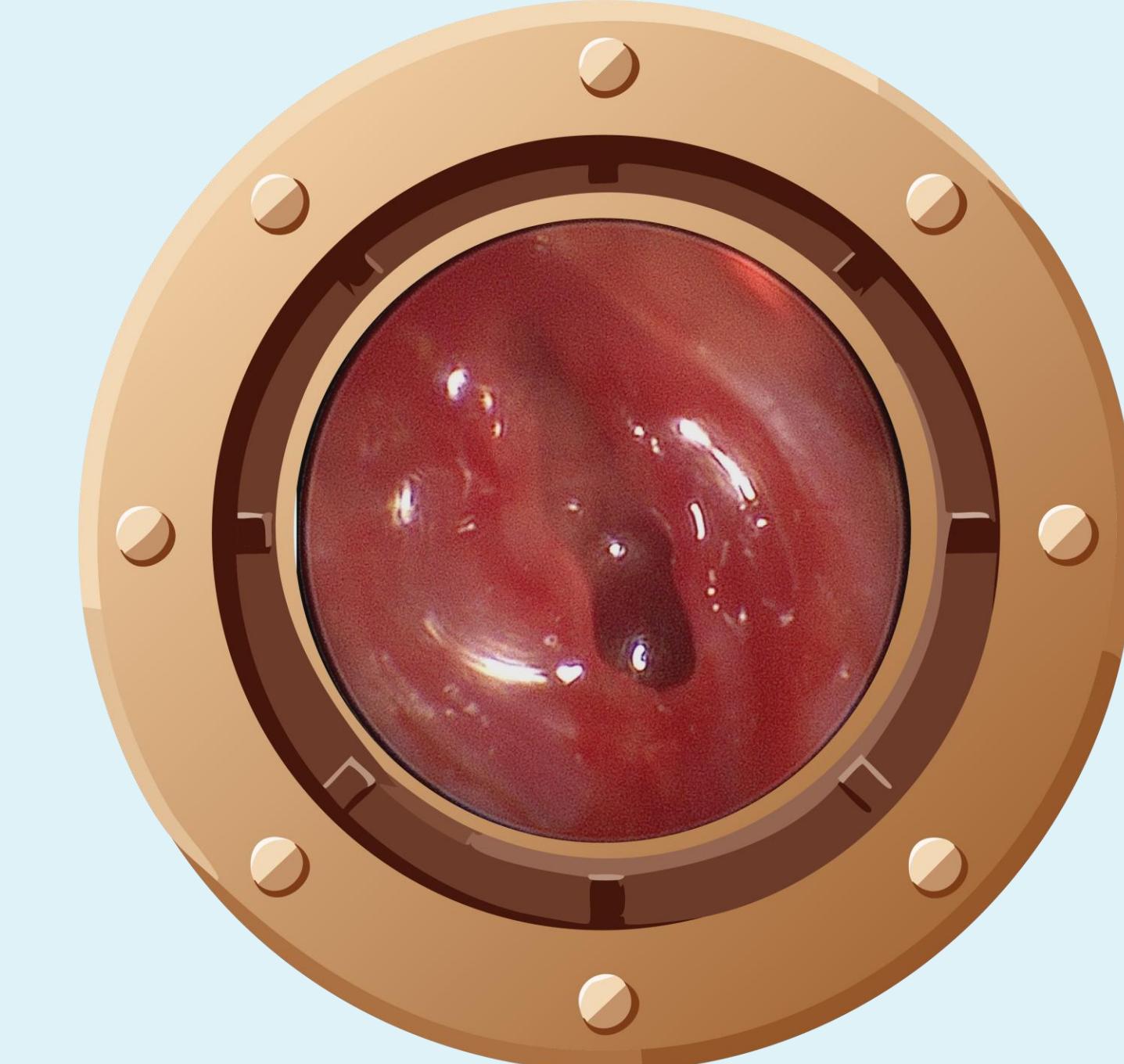
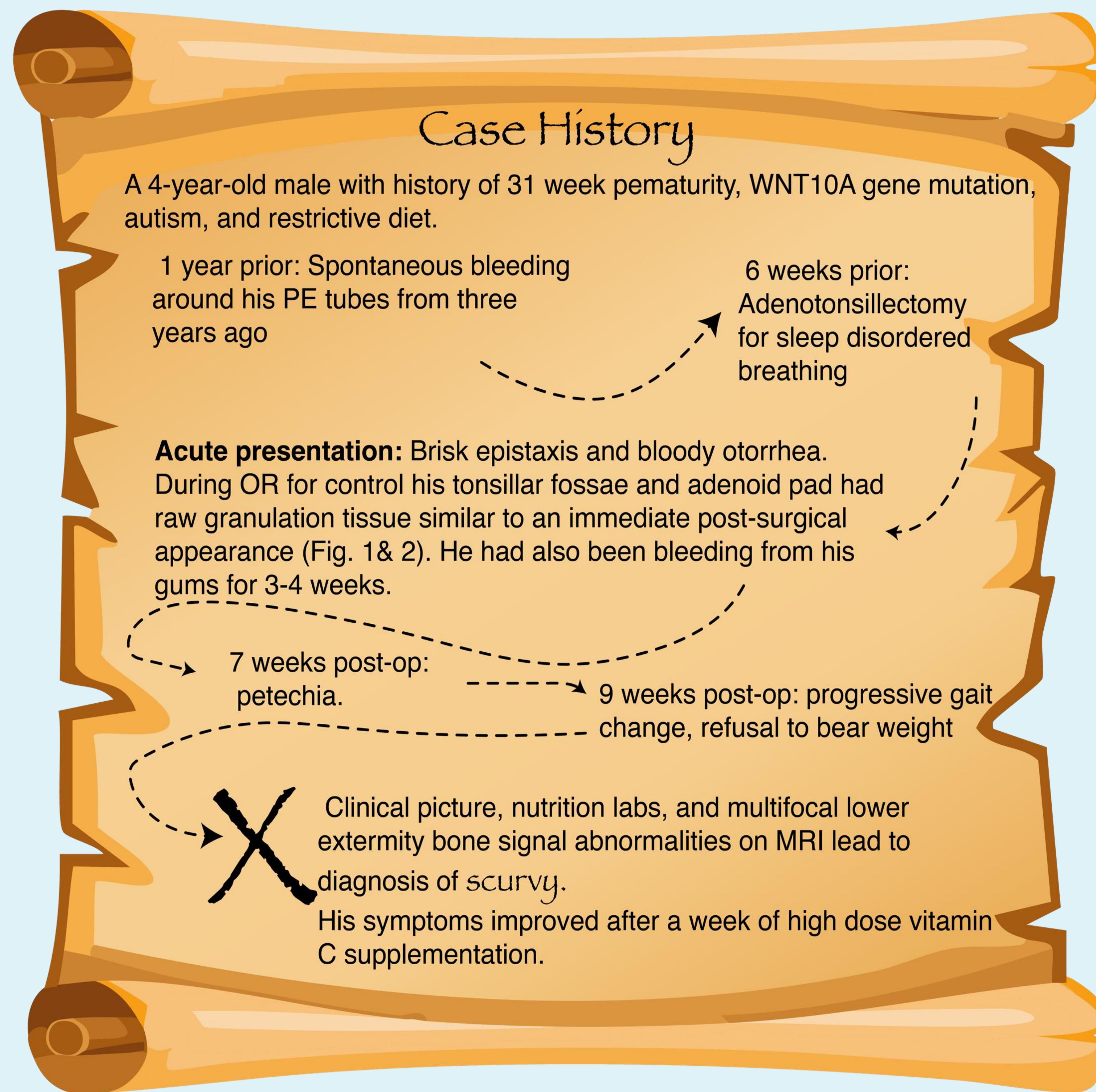
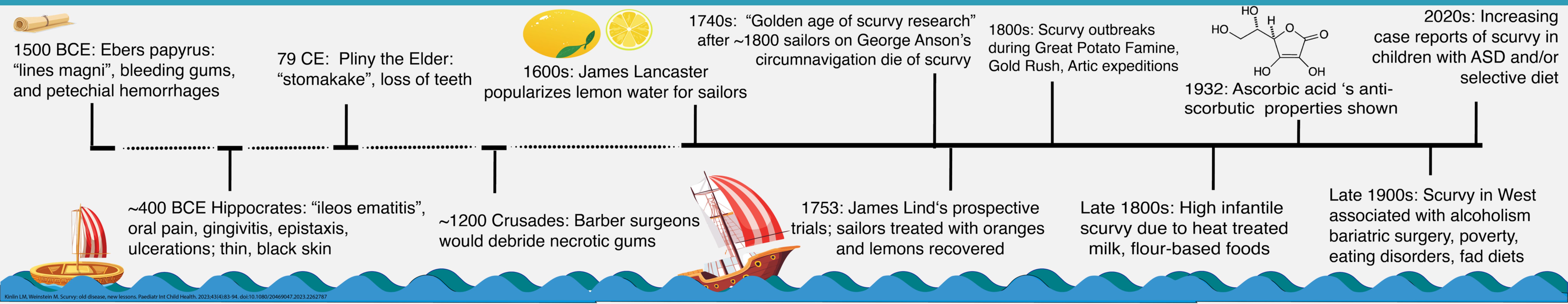


Figure 1: TM perforation 3 years after PET placement.

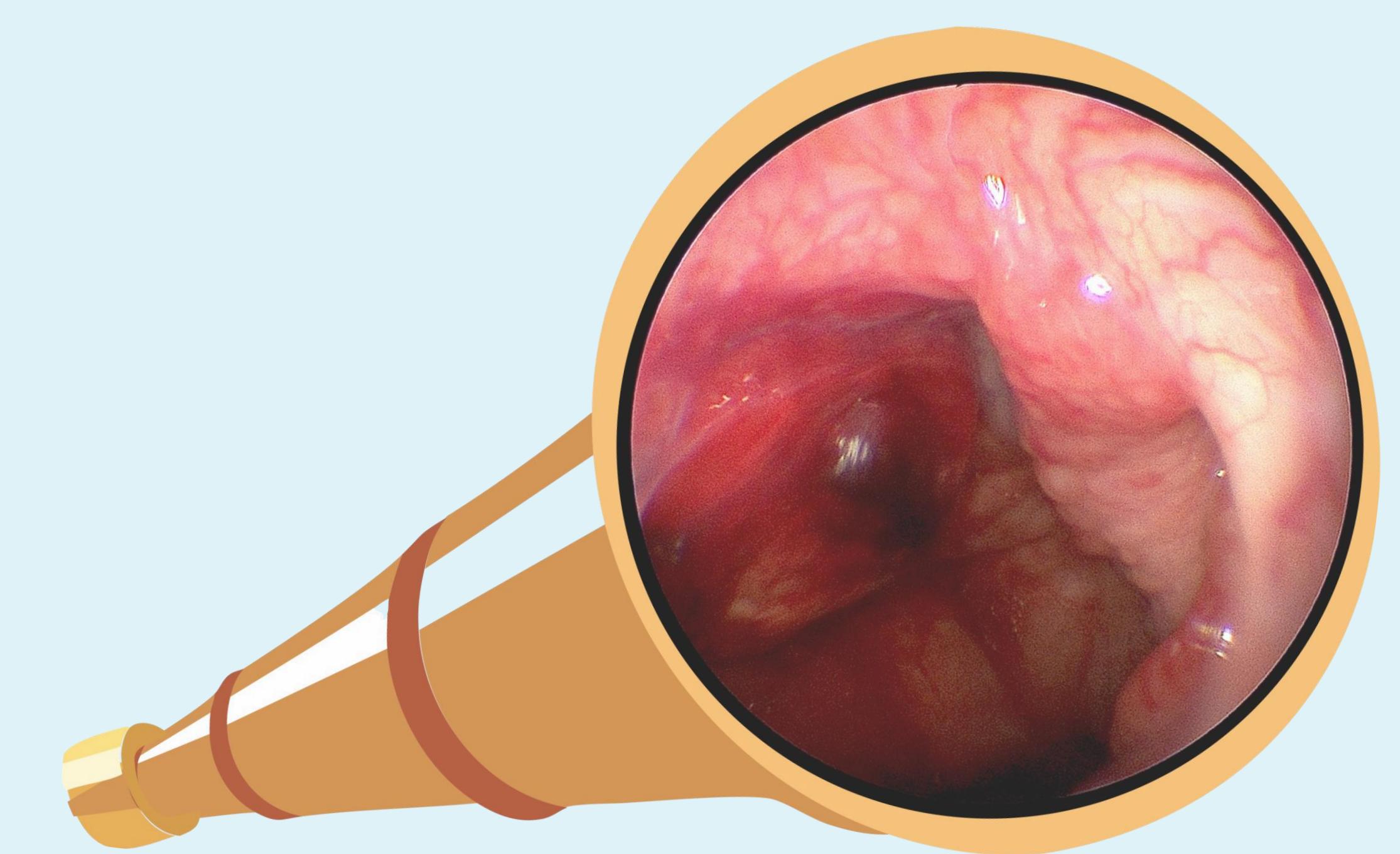


Figure 2: Adenoid pad 6 weeks post-op adenotonsillectomy

Discussion

- Scurvy is the clinical condition resulting from severe vitamin C deficiency with characteristic dermatologic, gingival, orthopedic, and wound healing findings.
- Lack of ascorbic acid for collagen synthesis results in susceptibility to subcutaneous, subperiosteal, and gingival bleeding. Inefficient bone metabolism causes diffuse osteopenia and characteristic imaging findings in long-bones. Poor wound healing and associated infection or hemorrhage can be fatal.
- Scurvy is rare in the developed world often resulting in delayed recognition, as was the case for this patient. The presence of bleeding from the gums at time of his post-op hemorrhages was in retrospect a clue.
- This patient's WNT10A mutation is associated with ectodermal dysplasia but not wound-healing or bleeding issues.
- The most common presenting sign in this age group is a limp.
- The diagnosis is made by clinically but can be supported by vitamin C level and bone imaging. When there is clinical suspicion for scurvy a more comprehensive nutrition consultation and workup is warranted
- The incidence of scurvy is increasing in the pediatric age group and is associated with autism, restrictive diets, and high preference for single foods.

Conclusion

Scurvy is increasing in prevalence in the developed world and can present as poorly healing or regressing head and neck wounds including after surgery. The pediatric otolaryngologist should have an increased index of suspicion in children with food insecurity, restrictive diet, or autism.

References

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