



CommunityENT

EAR • NOSE • THROAT • ALLERGY

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Pediatric Ear Tube Post-Operative Instructions

What are ear tubes?

Ear tubes are tiny hollow tubes made of soft plastic that are barely visible to the naked eye. These tubes are placed in your child's ear drums to reduce the number of ear infections by letting air into middle ear space and draining fluid out. Ear tubes can help restore normal hearing.

What happens during ear tube surgery?

Ear tubes surgery is out-patient surgery. The ear tubes are put in a child's ears while the child is asleep under general anesthesia. The surgeon makes a small incision in the eardrum and places the ear tube. If there is fluid, the fluid is suctioned out. Most tubes spontaneously extrude from the eardrum on their own. Surgery on both eardrums usually takes less than 20 mins. Recovery from anesthesia is rapid and your child typically goes home within 1-2 hours of the procedure.

When will my child's hearing improve?

Many children can hear better immediately after ear tube placement. Sometimes loud noises seem to frighten children after ear tubes, this will go away as soon as your child gets used to hearing normally.

How can I take care of my child?

1. **Pain Medication:** Many children are back to normal a few hours after surgery and do not require medication. If your child seems fussy or runs a fever after surgery, give acetaminophen every 4 hours
2. **Diet:** Your child may feel sick to his/her stomach and throw up after surgery. Give clear cool liquids first and then slowly return to a normal diet.
3. **Ear Drainage:** Because an opening into the eardrum has been made you might see drainage. The drainage can be clear, yellow, pink or bloody. Depending on

the surgery, your physician might give your child ear drops after surgery. Take these drops as directed. Sometimes the drops sting a little bit, if the stinging causes too much discomfort, you may stop the drops

4. **Water Protection:** It is typically not necessary to protect your child's ears from clean water such as chlorinated pool water, bath or shower water. Any water with bacteria such as lakes, rivers, oceans or streams, you need to protect the ears with ear plugs. In addition to ear plugs, a swim cap or custom ear plugs might be beneficial. Silly putty should not be used in the ears! Diving more than a few feet should be avoided. Below are some examples of ear protection we recommend:



Original Ear Band-It®

5. **Ear infections:** Ear tubes will help stop or significantly decrease the amount of ear infections most of the time. If your child's ear is draining, call the office. Oftentimes, we can stop the draining with topical ear drops.
6. **Tube removal:** Most ear tubes fall out of the ear drums on their own. Regular follow up is important to ensure this happens. Approximately 3% of ears will be left with a small hole after the ear tube has fallen out. If the ear tubes do not fall out on their own, your physician will recommend surgical removal. 25 % of children will need another set of ear tubes.

Call the Office if:

- Your child's vomiting lasts more than 24 hours or he/she has signs of dehydration
- Ear pain is not helped by Tylenol
- Ear drainage lasts longer than 5 days.

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