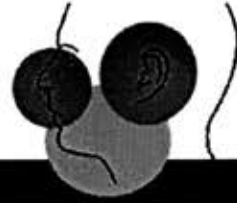




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Tympanostomy Tubes in Children

When medical therapy is ineffective, tympanostomy tubes (ear tubes) may be recommended for the treatment of ear fluid, recurrent ear infections, and hearing loss. The procedure is painlessly done while the child is asleep under general anesthesia, which is supervised by an anesthesiologist. Most of the time, the procedure is an outpatient procedure that takes about 15 minutes. A small incision is made in the eardrum, which allows insertion of the tube into the eardrum.

Tympanostomy tubes usually stay in place from 9-18 months and fall out as the eardrum regenerates. The tubes are not visible, and they are not felt by the child. Ear tubes reduce the severity and frequency of infections, fluid, and hearing loss, but cannot reverse the underlying reasons for the ear disease (young age, smoke exposure, allergies, etc). The ear tubes work by allowing drainage of fluid behind the eardrum and improving function of the middle ear (the cavity behind the eardrum). When the tubes are in place, it is not unusual for children to have drainage when they get "colds" or allergy symptoms.

Placement of ear tubes has few risks. When the tubes fall out, less than 5% of children will have a small hole in the eardrum (perforation) that could require additional surgical repair. About 1 out of 10 children develop drainage from the ear that requires antibiotic treatment. Most children only need tubes placed once, but about 15% may need multiple sets of tubes.

A follow up visit will be scheduled to check the ear tubes and to recheck hearing. Usually the child is seen every 6 months until the tubes fall out to ensure that the eardrum heals.

Instructions after surgery

- It is not unusual to have **ear drainage** after surgery. Sometimes this drainage can be bloody, which can be a sign of inflammation. Ear drops (if prescribed) should be continued as directed and the cotton ball be changed as often as needed.
- Mild **ear pain** or pulling at the ears may require treatment with Tylenol.
- **Fever** up to 101degrees Fahrenheit may sometimes occur and should be treated with Tylenol and plenty of fluids. If fever > 101 F persists, please call the office.
- **Clear liquids** (Sprite, water, Jello) are recommended for the first few hours after surgery, after which regular diet is usually OK.
- Normal **activity** (including daycare) can usually be resumed the day after surgery
- **Water should be kept out of the ears for 48 hours.** This can be done by placing a cottonball covered with Vaseline Petroleum jelly in the ear canal. If some water does enter the ear and cause pain, use Tylenol as needed. **Avoid the use of Q-tips.**
- The doctor will notify you *if* earplugs will be needed during swimming and other water exposure while the tubes are in place (usually they are **not** needed). However, dirty bathtub water and lake water should be kept out of the ear with ear plugs.

Please call the office at 972-731-7654, and speak to medical assistant for any concerns.

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