



Home Care Instructions After Ear Tube Placement

This sheet gives you information on how to care for your child after ear tube placement.

What can I expect when my child comes home?

- ❖ **Ear Drainage:** Your child may have some ear drainage right after her ear tube placement. The drainage may be clear to brownish and sometimes blood-tinged.
- ❖ **Minor Pain:** There is typically little pain after ear tube placement. If your child has pain, acetaminophen or ibuprofen should help (see medication section below)
- ❖ **Activity:** Your child may resume all of her normal activities after fully recovered from anesthesia.
 - She can fly in an airplane.
- ❖ **Diet:** Your child may return to a normal diet when you return home.

Medication

- ❖ **Eardrops:** You will be given a bottle of eardrops to use for three days after surgery. Only give your child drops prescribed by your health care provider.
 - Place the drops in the ear canal; press your finger against the flap of skin in front of the ear canal a few times after placing the drops. This will help the drops enter the ear tube.
 - Some children do not like ear drops. Try warming the drops to body temperature before putting them in. You can do this by rolling the bottle between the palms of your hands or putting it into your pocket for 15 to 20 minutes. You can also give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Feverall®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) 20 minutes before giving ear drops.
- ❖ **Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen:** You may give your child acetaminophen or ibuprofen for any pain, discomfort or fever. Follow the directions for medication dosing exactly as directed on the package. You may ask your health care provider or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand.

Water Precautions

Although most children with tubes do not need ear plugs, they may be necessary in the following situations:

- ❖ pain or discomfort when water enters the ear canal
- ❖ you see discharge or drainage coming out of the ear canal
- ❖ frequent or prolonged episodes of ear discharge

Other times when ear plugs may be needed on a one-time basis are:

- ❖ swimming more than six feet under water
- ❖ swimming in ponds, lakes or non-chlorinated pools
- ❖ dunking head in the bathtub

If your child needs earplugs, you can choose from a variety of soft, fitted ear plugs. **Never use Play-Doh or Silly Putty** as an earplug, because it can become trapped in the ear canal. Once the tube becomes blocked or comes out, you don't need ear plugs if there is no hole in the eardrum.

Follow-up Appointment

You should have an appointment with your clinical team within **two to four weeks after the ear tubes are placed** and then every six to 12 months, as long as your child has ear tubes in place, no matter how well your child is doing. These appointments are important so we can check on the tubes. You may see your primary care doctor in between these visits for any concerns.

When should I call my child's doctor?

Call your child's doctor if:

- ❖ Her ears drain more than five days after the surgery
- ❖ She has a fever greater than 101.5°F longer than 24 hours after surgery
- ❖ She has blood or yellow-green drainage from her ear
- ❖ She has pain that does not respond to acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- ❖ If you have any questions or concerns



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How to contact us:

| | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------|
| Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:30 pm | Nursing Line | 630-761-5531 |
| Evenings, Nights, Weekends | Answering Service | 630-761-5531 |

Ear Tubes and Ear Infections

If your child gets an ear infection with visible drainage or discharge from the ear canal:

- ❖ Do not worry: The drainage shows that the tube is working to drain infection from the middle ear space. Most children do not have pain or fever with an infection when the tube is in place and working.
- ❖ Ear drainage can be clear, cloudy or even bloody. There is no danger to your child's hearing.
- ❖ The best treatment is antibiotic ear drops alone. Only give drops prescribed by your health care provider.
- ❖ Place the drops in the ear canal; press your finger against the flap of skin in front of the ear canal a few times after placing the drops. This will help the drops enter the ear tube.
- ❖ Prevent water from entering into the ear canal during bathing or hair washing by using either ear plugs or a piece of cotton saturated with Vaseline to cover the opening. Don't have your child go swimming until the drainage stops.
- ❖ Oral antibiotics are unnecessary for most ear infections with tubes unless your child is very ill, has another reason to be on an antibiotic or the infection does not go away after using ear drops.
- ❖ If the condition continues after treatment, contact your pediatrician or ORL clinician.