



POSTOPERATIVE CARE TYMPANOSTOMY (EAR) TUBES

Tympanostomy (ear) tubes are placed in your child's eardrum to treat recurrent ear infections, fluid behind the eardrum, and abnormal pressure behind the eardrum. They allow air to enter through the eardrum to the middle ear and also allow any fluid to drain from behind the eardrum.

Common questions after surgery

Will I be able to see the tubes? The tubes are very small and you will not be able to see the tubes.

How long do tubes stay in the ear? Tubes are extruded from the ear drum as a natural process as the ear drum heals. The ear drum slowly grows in under the tube and the tube is extruded into the ear canal. Typical tubes will typically remain in place for 6 to 18 months (on average for 1 year). In some cases long term tubes are used.

Will my child be able to feel the tubes? Your child will not be able to feel the tubes. Most children have little if any discomfort. Some children may pull at their ears. Pain medication is usually not necessary, but acetaminophen (Tylenol) is recommended if necessary.

Will my child need medications after surgery? Your child's physician will prescribe antibiotic ear drops that are started on the day of surgery. Antibiotic ear drops are used after surgery to help maintain the patency of the tubes. It is important that immediately after placing the drops in the ear canal that you pump or push 4-5 times on the bump in front of your ear canal (the tragus). Some children complain that drops burn, sting or hurt. Drops are typically prescribed for 7 days after surgery; however, if your child has any of these complaints they can be stopped after 3 days.

What happens if my child runs a fever? Fevers are common after surgery. Your child may run a fever for several days after surgery. If the fever remains over 102 **and** is not improving 30-45 minutes after ibuprofen (Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) is given please call the office. It is important that children drink plenty of fluids after surgery. This will not only make them feel better, but will reduce the chance of fevers.

Does it hurt to get water in the ears? Does my child need to wear ear plugs when swimming? Your child may bathe or shower. Children who swim under water may be more susceptible to ear pain or infections. You can protect the ears from excessive water exposure by using silicone earplugs. We do not routinely recommend the use of earplugs for children with bathing or swimming in a pool (this includes traditionally chlorinated and salt water pools). If your child is going to be swimming under water in any fresh water source (un-chlorinated) or ocean water we do recommend the use of ear plugs.

Can my child use swimmer's ear drops in their ears after swimming? No. The use of swimmer's ear drops (which contain an alcohol and acid based liquid), rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide while the tubes are in place and functioning will lead to intense burning and pain for your child.

Should I be concerned if there is drainage from the ear? Drainage from the ears is never normal. Drainage from the ear is not unusual after surgery. The drainage can sometimes be pink tinged or yellow. This can happen if there was fluid or an infection at the time of surgery. Please make sure that you give your child eardrops (prescription will be given at the time of surgery). Please call the office if drainage continues for more than 3 days. This is not an emergency and is best discussed with the office during office hours. Ear tubes are not supposed to drain. The purpose of ear tubes is ventilation, so any drainage more than a week after surgery is concerning.

When should I call the doctor? Depending upon the health of your child's ear on the day of surgery, you may see blood or pus drain from your child's ear after surgery. If the drainage persist for more than 7 days after surgery we would recommend follow up in our clinic. After the initial postoperative course, anytime ear drainage is seen we would recommend that you contact our office.

Do we need to return to see the doctor after surgery? Your child should return to see us in the office for a post operative visit with the physician after surgery. We will repeat your child's hearing test with this visit. Our staff will instruct you on the necessary time frame for follow-up. Please call the office to schedule this appointment as soon as possible after surgery.

How can I reach the doctor after hours? There is a doctor on call 24 hours. If you need to reach us, please call the office number:

972-745-8400 or 817-337-3339