



Ear Tubes Surgery

Patient and Family Education

This teaching sheet contains general information. If you have any additional questions, please speak with the office nurse at (813) 262-1330.

What are ear tubes?

Ear tubes are commonly known as tympanostomy tubes, ventilation tubes, pressure equalizing tubes, or "PE" tubes. Ear tubes decrease the frequency of ear infections by draining fluid from the middle ear and restoring normal pressure. Preventing fluid from remaining in the middle ear can also help to restore and preserve normal hearing. Ear tubes are inserted under general anesthesia. Your doctor uses a microscope to gently place the tube through a very small incision in the ear drum. The tube is designed to be held in place without stitches. If fluid is present in the middle ear at the time of surgery it will be removed. Most tubes last between 6 and 18 months, depending on the type of tube. If they do not naturally fall out 3 years post-surgery, they may need to be removed surgically.

How long will it take to recover?

Most children are pain free within 24 hours after surgery. They may return to school or day care the day after surgery.

How can I take care of my child?

- 1. Pain:** Most children are back to normal within a few hours after surgery. If uncomfortable, please give Tylenol every 4 to 6 hours the day of surgery.
- 2. Ear Drainage:** Some drainage from the ears after surgery may be normal. This drainage can even be pink or red if the ears were inflamed and infected. Gently wipe the outside of the ear with a damp cloth and instill the antibiotic drops as prescribed.
- 3. Ear Tugging:** Tugging at the ears can be normal after surgery.
- 4. Water Precautions:** No ear plugs are needed for bath or shower time. When in a pool, plugs are needed only if swimming more than 3 feet under the water. When exposed to beach or lake water, plugs should be used due to the higher bacteria counts.
- 5. Post-Op Appointment:** A follow up appointment should be made in our office for 2-3 weeks after surgery, please call if not already scheduled.
- 6. Follow-up appointments:** Routine follow-ups are recommended every 4-6 months to make sure the ear tubes are in place and functional. All children need these follow-ups even if they appear well.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the office if your child experiences:

- A temperature over 101° F
- Ear pain not relieved with Tylenol
- Ear drainage that lasts more than 3 days
- If you have any concerns about how your child looks or feels