



Post-op ear tube instructions

Ear tube surgery is day surgery with little, if any, recovery required. If your child attends school or daycare, we recommend that he or she does not attend the day of surgery, but may return the following day. Fever as high as 102° F in the first few days following surgery is not common but sometimes may occur. Give Motrin, Advil (ibuprofen) or Tylenol (acetaminophen) if a fever is noted. The recovery period may be longer if your child has undergone other procedures (such as an adenoidectomy) at the same surgery.

Follow-up after surgery typically takes place after three (3) to four (4) weeks unless there are problems. Please call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment. After the initial follow-up we recommend that your child have additional follow-up visits every six months until the ear tubes extrude. If your child is experiencing problems, such as recurrent drainage from the ears, we may recommend they come in sooner.

Drainage from the ear, either blood or pus, can be expected for three to four days following surgery. Continue to use antibiotic drops as prescribed as long as you see drainage. **DO NOT use any ear drop that contains alcohol while the tubes are in place as this will cause pain.** If drainage lasts longer than a few days, bring your child to the office sooner for a follow-up visit so we can clean his or her ears.

Drainage occurring after the initial few weeks post-op may be an infection, or a back-up of nasal drainage through the ear tube. Nasal drainage from either allergies or upper respiratory tract infections (colds, sinus infections) can travel up the Eustachian tube and out through the ear tube and show up as drainage in the ear canal. When this occurs, use the antibiotic drops prescribed following surgery until a day or two after the ear drainage stops. Usually, once the nasal drainage stops, so will the ear drainage.

Occasionally, an ear infection may occur with ear tubes in place. Usually, you will see blood or pus from the ear canal. When this happens, use the antibiotic drops as prescribed. If there is a lot of drainage, or if there is bloody discharge, it is helpful to place one or two drops of hydrogen peroxide into the ear to clear out any discharge prior to administering the antibiotic drops. Call the office for an appointment if the drainage lasts longer than a few days so we can clean your child's ears.

It is OK for your child to swim and take baths when he or she has ear tubes, and ear plugs normally aren't necessary. Children who swim or bathe with ear tubes are not at higher risk for swimmer's ear. Older children with ear tubes may experience ear discomfort when swimming, especially when swimming underwater. If this is the case, you might have them try ear plugs. Don't let your child scuba dive with ear tubes in place. **Never use alcohol or "Swim Ear" drops after swimming while ear tubes are in place.** Flying in an airplane with ear tubes is not a problem. In fact, your child will not have to "pop" their ears during take-off and landing when he or she has ear tubes.