



Post-Op Instructions for Tympanostomy

Care instructions:

Your child may have a small amount of blood-tinged drainage for 1-2 days after the operation. Your child's ear may be slightly sore for the first several hours after the operation. If he/she has pain, you may give the recommended dosage of acetaminophen (Tylenol). Drainage is normal for the first 48 hours after surgery.

Children with a tube in or perforation of the ear drum should not have the following put in their ear canals: topical pain medications (such as Auralgan), wax removal preparations (such as Debrox, Ceruminex), "swimmers ear" preparations, and home remedies such as oil, peroxide, vinegar and alcohol.

Diet and activity:

Immediately after surgery, your child will do best with a liquid diet. When he/she is up and acting normally, a regular diet may be started. On the day after surgery, your child may return to usual activity, including school or daycare.

Ear drops:

Drops are often prescribed after surgery. Begin using these drops on the evening of surgery, as directed.

It may be recommended that the drops be used an additional few days if there is drainage for more than 72 hours after surgery, since persistent drainage is a sign of ongoing infection. If the drainage continues for more than seven days, or if other symptoms arise, please call our office.

When using drops, warm first by holding in the hand for a few minutes. After placing the drops, pump the front of ear next to the opening of the ear canal several times. This helps to propel the drops into the canal and through the tube.

Ear infections:

The primary purpose of tubes is to provide additional ventilation to the ear and thereby decrease the frequency of ear infections. However, children with tubes can still develop middle ear infections. Drainage from the ear, which may be thin, thick or blood tinged, is the most common sign. Your primary care provider can successfully treat these infections. If drainage persists despite medical therapy, please call our office to make an appointment.

Water precautions:

Do your best to prevent bath water from filling your child's ear canals. The ears should not be completely submerged in water. However, water splashed on the outer ear should not cause a problem.

During hair washing, some children will wear an inflatable visor designed to keep water off of their face. Other patients simply hold the child's ear down and cup their hand over the ear as they rinse the hair. Very young children will often reach up and remove whatever you place in their ears. Most families find they can successfully observe water precautions without purchasing ear plugs. However, what works best for each child and family is variable. The following types of ear protection can also be tried:

1. Cotton lightly coated with Vaseline
2. Silicone putty-type ear plugs
3. Other types of waterproof ear plug (eg. Doc Proplugs)
4. Ear bend-it
5. Custom-made ear plugs

If water does get in your child's ear, simply tip his/her head to each side. There is an excellent chance that the water will not have gone through the tiny opening in the tube. However, if you do observe drainage over the next few days, an infection has most likely developed.

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