

PEDIATRIC OTOLARYNGOLOGY

FACT SHEET

MYRINGOTOMY & TUBES

About the operation:

During the operation, a small cut will be made in the eardrum. Any fluid that is present will be drained from the middle ear. A very small hollow tube will be placed in the slit. This tube prevents the build-up of fluid behind the eardrum and leads to a significant reduction in the frequency of ear infections. The tube cannot be seen or felt from the outside. The tubes may remain in the eardrums for 6-24 months and usually fall out by themselves.

What to expect after the operation:

- Your child may complain of some ear pain on the day of the operation. Usually after resting and acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin), your child will feel better. If the pain continues after 3 days, call your doctor.
- There may be some blood-tinged drainage from the ears for up to 3 days after the operation. If the drainage continues after 3 days, call your doctor.
- Your doctor may prescribe eardrops to prevent plugging of the tube. Follow the directions your doctor gives you. Only use the eardrops ordered by your doctor. Do not use other drops.
- Pulling on the ears or playing with the ears is normal if your child is teething when the tubes are placed.

Daily activities after the operation:

- We suggest a light meal at first. You may advance to a normal diet as tolerated.
- Your child may bathe, shower, and swim. It is better to keep water out of the ears.

You can use:

- A cotton ball covered with Vaseline on one side
- Custom-made ear molds
- Earplugs
- Silicone ear putty
- Make a plug for each ear. Shape the putty like a teardrop. Insert the slightly pointed end into the ear, and then firmly flatten the putty with your thumb. Do not force the putty deeply into the canal. To remove the putty, gently pull the ear outward and grab the edge of the putty with your fingertip.
- Your child may return to school and play activities the day after the operation.

When to call the doctor:

- Your child has increased drainage in the ear.
- The drainage lasts more than 3 days after surgery.
- Drainage that occurs weeks after the operation.

- Your child has a fever (38.5° C or 101° F under the arm, 39° C or 102° F by mouth or rectally).
- Your child complains of constant ear pain.

Prescriptions:

- Ear drops: Use 5 drops three times a day for three days or as directed by your child's doctor.
- May get prescription for antibiotic by mouth

Follow-up appointment:

The follow-up appointment should be made 2-3 weeks after surgery. You can call the following numbers to make arrangements, depending on where your doctor saw your child before surgery:

- Duchossois Center for Advanced Medicine at the University of Chicago Medicine: 773-702-1865.
- The University of Chicago Pediatric Specialists at Merrillville: 219-756-1200
- The University of Chicago Specialists at Matteson: 708-748-2310

Afterwards, your physician will probably schedule a follow-up visit every 6 months or so to check on the placement and condition of the ear tubes.



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