

Myringotomy and Tubes

A myringotomy is an incision in the eardrum to remove middle ear fluid and prevent its recurrence. Usually a small tube is inserted through the drum to keep the middle ear open for a longer time. These tubes usually remain in place for 8-12 months and fall out by themselves. At that time, they may require removal by the physician in the office. It is important to have a follow up in the months to come to examine the ears and check the tubes.

Comfort Measures:

- There may be a small amount of blood-tinged drainage from the ear canal for the first 2-3 days. Use a small cotton ball in the ear to catch drainage, if desired.
- The ears may be sore for the first day or so after surgery. Tylenol is usually all that is needed to relieve the discomfort.

Wound Care

- Use a dampened washcloth to clean the outer ears of any drainage. If drainage is crusted inside the ear canal, a moistened cotton swab may be used. Never insert the swab farther into the canal than you can see to avoid damaging the ear.
- Keep the ear canals dry. When bathing or washing the hair, earplugs or cotton covered in Vaseline should be used to keep the water out. **Do not swim or submerge the head under water** without well-fitting earplugs. Discuss this with your physician. Serious swimmers may want to have "custom-made" earplugs.
- Ear drops are often used after surgery to clear up infection that may be present. Sometimes the packaging may say that they are eye drops—these are used in the ears as well. Use the drops as directed.

Activity:

- Rest the first 24 hours. You may resume activity the day after surgery if you are up to it.
- Keep the ears dry.

Notify your physician for any of the following:

- 1. Ear drainage that persists longer than a week past surgery or drainage that develops anytime in the future.**
- 2. Fever 101 degrees or higher**
- 3. Bright red bleeding that is profuse or persists**
- 4. Inability to take adequate fluids by mouth or persistent nausea or vomiting.**
- 5. Severe pain unrelieved by medications**