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Home Care Instructions: Ear Tubes

- Watch for drainage from the ears. Some blood-tinged drainage is normal. If drainage becomes heavy, draining onto the pillow or clothing, call our office.
- Give light foods after leaving the hospital on the day of surgery. Examples include Jell-O, fruit juices, soups, etc.
- Give age and weight appropriate doses of acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain relief. Acetaminophen comes in tablet, capsule, and liquid forms and is available at any drug store. Follow the dosing directions on the package and ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand. Do not take more of it than prescribed by your doctor. Do not take it any more than prescribed by your doctor.
- A slightly raised temperature is common for the first few days after surgery. If your child's temperature exceeds 101°F by mouth, give an age and weight appropriate dose of acetaminophen and call our office for further instructions.
- Encourage your child to increase fluid intake for the first 2 days after surgery. This will help prevent body temperature elevation.
- Ear drops may be used in the ear(s) with the tube(s) for the first three or four days. Instill three drops three times a day. Do not discard the remainder of the drops in case you need them at a later date.
- If a return office appointment is not made when you leave the surgery area, please contact our clinic (405-608-8833) the next business day to schedule the appointment.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why does my child need tubes?** The most common reasons are for chronic ear infections, chronic fluid in middle ear, and hearing loss.
- **When can my child return to school or daycare?** The day of surgery many children are more tired and fussy, but the main part of recovery is allowing the anesthesia to wear off. People are usually able to go home several hours after surgery and return to normal activities the next day. Tylenol and Motrin are used to ease the pain.
- **Are tubes permanent?** No. Tubes are designed to stay in place in the ear anywhere from 4 months to 2 years (average is around 6-18 months). After this time period the tubes typically fall out on their own and the eardrum quickly heals itself. You might not see them when they fall out because of the size.
- **Are follow up appointments necessary?** Yes. Your child will be seen in our clinic 1 month after surgery with a hearing test. If they are doing well, then we will usually schedule another check up in 6 months. We will get a subsequent hearing test once per year while the tubes are in place.
- **Can my child get water in his/her ears when tubes are in place?** It depends. It is recommended that you keep water out of your child's ears for the first 48 hours after they are placed. This can be done by using wax earplugs (which can be purchased over the counter at your local pharmacy or department store) or a cotton ball rolled in Vaseline. There are also custom fitted ear plugs available from our audiology department. In general, it is recommended that your child wear some sort of an ear plug if he or she swims in non-chlorinated water (lakes, rivers, ponds, etc.), soaks his/her head in soapy bathwater, or if he/she is diving in water greater than 3 feet. It is not mandatory that he/she wear earplugs routinely in the bath or shower or if splashing on the surface of a clean chlorinated pool.
- **Can my child still get ear infections with tubes in place?** Yes. Tubes help prevent frequent ear infections, but it is still possible to get an infection. Now, if your child has an ear infection they may still have fever, fussiness, or pull at their ears but you may also see drainage from the affected ear. The drainage can be white, yellow, thick, and/or mucous-like. If you suspect that your child has an ear infection, please contact your primary care physicians or our office for an appointment.

If you need to contact a physician and it is after 5pm on weekends and holidays, call our clinic to be transferred to the after-hours operator.