

## **Post Operative Instructions: Ear Tubes**

### **Description of the surgery**

During the operation, a small incision was made in the eardrum. Any fluid that was present in the middle ear behind the ear drum was drained through the slit with a microscopic suction. This tube will decrease the chances of fluid building up again behind the eardrum. The tube cannot be seen or felt from the outside. The tube itself is about 4 mms in size, and will remain in place for roughly 9 – 18 months before they fall out by themselves into the canal.

### **What to Expect After the Operation**

1. Your child may complain of some ear pain for up to 48 hours after the operation. Usually after resting and Tylenol or Ibuprofen, your child will feel better. If the pain continues after 3 days, call your surgeon.
2. There may be some blood tinged drainage from the ears for up to 3 days after the operation. If the drainage persists after 3 days, call your surgeon.
3. Your surgeon has prescribed ear drops to prevent the tubes from clogging. They also prevent infection after the surgery. Only use the ear drops that were ordered. Do not use any other drops in the ear.
4. Pulling on the ears or playing with the ears is normal after surgery.
5. Being sensitive to noise after ear tube placement is also normal.

### **Daily Activities After the Operation**

1. Start with a light meal. Advance the diet as tolerated.
2. Your child may bathe or shower without ear plugs. It is best for children to protect the ears with ear plugs for swimming. These may be purchased in the office. We also offer custom ear plugs that can be made to order. Other ear protection methods include silicone ear putty and head bands.

## Possible Complications

Myringotomy with insertion of ear tubes is an extremely common and safe procedure with minimal complications. When complications do occur, they may include:

- **Perforation** – This can happen when a tube comes out or a long-term tube is removed and the hole in the tympanic membrane (ear drum) does not close. The hole can be patched through a minor surgical procedure called a tympanoplasty or myringoplasty.
- **Scarring** – Any irritation of the ear drum (recurrent ear infections), including repeated insertion of ear tubes, can cause scarring called tympanosclerosis or myringosclerosis. In most cases, this causes no problems with hearing.
- **Infection** – Ear infections can still occur in the middle ear or around the ear tube. However, these infections are usually less frequent, result in less hearing loss, and are easier to treat – often only with antibiotic ear drops. Sometimes an oral antibiotic is still needed.
- **Ear Tubes Come Out Too Early Or Stay In Too Long** – If an ear tube expels from the ear drum too soon (which is unpredictable), fluid may return and repeat surgery may be needed. Ear tubes that remain too long may result in perforation or may require removal by the otolaryngologist.