

ROCKY MOUNTAIN PEDIATRIC ENT ASSOCIATES

Introduction Sheet for Myringotomy with Tubes (Ear Tubes)

1. **Introduction:** A myringotomy is an incision made in the ear drum to drain middle ear fluid and prevent its recurrence. A small tube is inserted through the ear drum to keep the middle ear open for a longer time. Usually ear tubes remain in place 8-15 months and fall out by themselves. It is impossible to predict how long a tube will last.
2. **What to expect after your child's operation:** Your child may have a small amount of blood-tinged drainage after the operation. Your child's ear may be sore for the first several hours after the surgery. If he/she has pain, you may give the recommended dosage of Tylenol or Ibuprofen written on the label of the bottle.
3. **What your child may eat and do:** Immediately following surgery your child will do best drinking liquids. When he/she is up and acting normally, he/she may have a regular diet. On the day after surgery your child may return to normal activity, including school.
4. **What to do when your child swims or bathes:** For several decades we have not required that children with tubes wear ear plugs while swimming or bathing. In that time there has been no increase in the incidence of ear infections. Ear plugs are not required for routine swimming (unless swimming on dirty water). We do not allow any swimming if there is drainage coming from the ear. If your child experiences discomfort with swimming or head dunking in the bathtub, you may use ear plugs. Plugs can provide added protection and can certainly be used if desired. If you have any questions concerning this advice, please ask.
5. **Using ear drops:** You will receive a prescription for Ciprodex for your child's ears either at the preoperative visit or the day of surgery. Unless you are instructed otherwise place 4-5 drops in each ear twice daily for 7 days following surgery. In some cases your child's physician may ask you to give the drops for a longer time period if ears are infected at the time of surgery. If you are advised not to use the drops after surgery please SAVE the prescription/bottle. You may need it in the future should your child develop ear drainage. Some children experience pain with administration of the ear drops, which is a normal sensation and usually nothing to worry about. You can try warming the drops (roll the bottle in your hands or tuck bottle under your arm for a few minutes) prior to administration which may ease discomfort.
If ear drainage occurs, warm the drops by holding them in your hand or keeping them in your pocket for several minutes. You may clean the opening to the ear canal first if there is an accumulation of drainage, but do not place the cotton swabs deep into the ear canal. Squeeze 4-5 drops into the draining ear and pump the front of the ear beside the opening several times. Cotton may be placed in the ear to prevent excess drops from staining clothes. Use the drops twice daily for 7 days, please continue to use drops for at least 3 days after the drainage resolves. If the drainage continues for longer than a week or restarts soon after stopping the drops, please restart the drops and call for an appointment.
6. **What to do if your child has a problem:** Call our office at 303-301-9019 if your child has pus or blood draining from the ears that is not relieved by drops after 7 days or if you have other questions.
7. **Follow-up visits** after the placement of ventilation (ear) tubes will be scheduled with an ENT provider, approximately 1 week after surgery. We may also repeat a hearing test at the follow-up visit. It is important to have follow-up with ENT every 4-6 months to examine the ears and check the tubes.
8. **Numbing drops:** Avoid the use of numbing drops (Auralgan or antipyrine/benzocaine) when your child has ear tubes in place.

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Practice Recommendations for Water Precautions in Children with Tympanostomy (Ear) Tubes

It's okay to swim! Children with ear tubes are encouraged to participate in normal swimming.

When to wear ear plugs:

- If your child **swims in “dirty water,”** such as a lakes, rivers, oceans or puts his/her head under the bath water for long periods of time. Ear plugs should be considered because these situations may result in water going through the ear tube, which can lead to a middle ear infection.
- If you child **experiences discomfort** when water enters their ears with normal swimming you may use ear plugs to make swimming a more enjoyable experience.
- Ear plugs may also be useful for children who frequently dive in deep water.

Drainage:

YOUR CHILD SHOULD NOT SWIM WITH ACTIVE EAR DRAINAGE.

DO NOT USE Preventative drops for “swimmer’s” ear—also called otitis externa
There are several commercially available drops that can be used to dry the ear after swimming. These drops should NEVER be used if your child has tubes in his/her ears or a hole in the eardrum.

Please call our office (303.301.9019) if you have questions.