



Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

**POST OPERATIVE CARE INSTRUCTIONS
FOLLOWING THE INSERTION OF EAR TUBES (PE TUBES)**

The following instructions will help you know what to expect in the days following placement of tubes. Please call if you have any further questions or concerns.

Activity: Normal activity is permitted as soon as your child feels able. This will usually be within 6-24 hours.

Diet: Normal.

Pain: There should be little or no pain immediately after surgery. However, if significant pain or discomfort persists, Tylenol (acetaminophen) may be given to relieve discomfort. Follow the directions on the bottle. See the back of this sheet for Tylenol (acetaminophen) dosing that is appropriate for children.

Fever: A low-grade fever may occur and should be treated with Tylenol (acetaminophen). If a fever of 101.5 F or greater persists, please call.

Drainage: During the first one or two days, there may be some blood-tinged discharge from the ear(s). Some bleeding immediately following surgery is often seen. If the drainage persists for more than five days, call.

Ear Infections: Now that there is a hole in the eardrum, ear infections will be apparent by the presence of drainage from the ear canal. This can look like pus or blood or both. This typically means that an ear infection is present and the ear tubes are working properly. This drainage is not a cause for concern and it can be readily treated with antibiotic ear drops. If you have drops remaining from the time of surgery, you may start using them as soon as you see pus/blood draining from the ear. Please call us or your pediatrician to let us know.

Ear Drops: We are sending you home from surgery with antibiotic ear drops for your child. You are to put 5-6 drops in each ear, morning and night for 3 days. If pus drains from the ear after three days, please continue the ear drops for 7 days. If the drainage has not stopped by 7 days, then call.

Water Precautions: Swimming in a pool with chlorine water does not require the use of ear plugs. If your child swims in lake or pond water and immerses their head, it is wise to use ear plugs to prevent contaminated water entry through the ear tubes. Bathing and showering in tap water is probably not a source of infection, but some doctors prefer that ear plugs be worn in the bath for safe measure.

Follow-Up: Arrange to see us four to six weeks after surgery. We also like to see children every 6 months until their tubes have come out. To schedule appointments at St. Louis Children's Hospital or the West County office, please call 314-454-6162.

PLEASE CALL IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS!

Office phone number 314-454-6162 / Monday - Friday 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM.

After regular hours, call 314-454-6000 and have the operator contact the ENT resident on call.

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