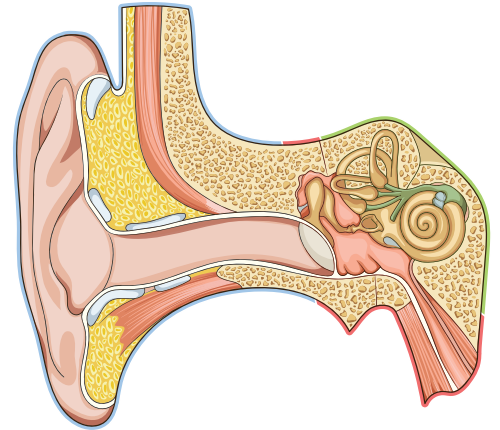




Ear Tubes

Instructions After Surgery

Ear Tubes equalize the pressure between the ear canal and the middle ear space and equalize pressure the same way you might pop your ears with elevation. This bypasses a poorly functioning or immature eustachian tube. The Eustachian tube is what we use to pop our ears and when functioning properly helps to keep us from getting ear infections.



Why are Ear Tubes placed?

- Recurrent ear infections
- Long-standing fluid in the middle ear space
- Hearing loss due to middle ear fluid
- Weakening in the eardrum from chronic pressure

What is the process for Ear Tube placement?

The procedure can be done in the office with topical anesthetic in adults however children require a short general anesthetic. A small incision or hole is cut in the eardrum and the tube is placed through it to keep it open and equalize the pressure.

What is expected after Ear Tube placement?

1. There is no significant pain after ear tubes. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is typically enough if anything is required
2. There may be clear, yellow, or even a little bloody drainage for the first few days. Please let us know if it lasts longer than the eardrops.
3. You will typically be instructed to use ear drops for 3-7 days after the procedure.
4. DO NOT use over the counter ear drops after ear tubes. They may hurt or cause damage.



5. Return to normal activity the same day. For children, daycare or school should wait until the next day due to the anesthesia.

What about swimming or bathing?

- You should discuss with your doctor but typically we do not recommend earplugs while swimming or bathing in most children
- Earplugs may be recommended for people who get recurrent drainage, swim in unknown water, or dive on a regular basis.

What is the usual follow-up for ear tubes?

This may vary but typically you or your child will be seen in 2-4 weeks to confirm the tubes are functioning properly and then typically every 6-12 months until they have fallen out which is typically 9-18 months after they have been placed.

When should I contact the physician after surgery?

1. Fever over 102
2. Persistent pain or drainage after the eardrops are complete
3. Ear infections diagnosed when there is no drainage present

What are the risks of ear tubes?

The risk of ear tubes is low but include a long-term hole in the eardrum which may or may not require repair, scarring in the eardrum, ongoing ear infections or draining ears, early or late extrusion of the tubes, or recurring requirements for tubes on one or more occasions.

Resources:

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003015.htm>
(Spanish available)

<https://www.enthealth.org/conditions/earaches/>