

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of the healthcare team about specific care for your child.

WHAT IS MYRINGOTOMY AND TYMPANOSTOMY TUBE INSERTION?

More commonly known as ear tubes, or BM&T (bilateral myringotomy and tympanostomy tubes), this is a procedure where an incision is made into the ear drum in order to remove fluid from the inner ear space, as well as prevent fluid from reaccumulating in that space. There are several indications for ear tube insertion, which your physician will discuss with you. The procedure involves a small tube being inserted through the ear drum to keep the middle ear open for a longer time. These small ear tubes usually stay in the ear drum for approximately 8-15 months (on average) and may fall out by themselves. There is no way of knowing how long ear tubes will remain in place when they are inserted.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?

- **DIET** - Your child may eat or drink whatever they like after surgery. It is advisable to start with clear liquids (juice, water, ice chips, Gatorade, etc.) to avoid nausea and vomiting from the anesthesia.
- **ACTIVITY** - Starting the day after surgery, there are no restrictions on activities. Your child may return to school, sports, or organized activities as able.
- **PAIN** - Your child may experience little to no pain after surgery. However, if you think your child is in discomfort, they may have children's acetaminophen or children's ibuprofen as needed. Please follow dosing per the medication labels.
- **BLEEDING** - A small amount of blood-tinged fluid from the ears is normal for the first 2-3 days after ear tube insertion, especially if there was an active ear infection at time of surgery. If you see heavy bleeding from the ear, please call the office right away at 404-255-2033.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SWIMMING, BATHING, AND WATER EXPOSURE:

First 48 hrs after surgery - Keep the ears dry. Try to avoid bathing on the night after surgery, but if your child needs a bath, do not wash above the mouth, or you can place ear plugs in order to avoid water exposure during this time.

** Some children will have longer lasting ear tubes that can stay in for years. These children will have specific instructions from their surgeon on how to care for them.*

After 48 hrs Children with ear tubes DO NOT need to wear ear plugs unless they are routinely doing deep swimming or swimming in "dirty" water (lakes, rivers). Please do not allow your child to swim if there is any drainage out of the ears. Occasionally, a child with ear tubes may have pain with water exposure. If this occurs, they may use ear plugs when in the water.

EAR DRAINAGE AND MEDICATION EAR DROPS:

You may be given a prescription for ear drops for use after surgery. Sometimes, the physician will have you give them to your child for a few days after surgery. If they are not needed directly after surgery, then save your prescription (have pharmacy put it on file) for future use. Also, once ear tubes are in place, do not use over the counter swimmers ear drops or prescription drops intended to treat pain (A/B Otic or Auralgan drops). They may cause extreme pain if given.

If/when your child develops ear drainage or an ear infection (usually cloudy, yellow drainage) after ear tube insertion, please start using the prescription antibiotic ear drops as directed (usually 4-5 drops to affected ear twice per day for 5-7 days). Ear drops feel better to children when they are close to body temperature, so you may want to bring them to room temperature prior to giving them. You may place the drops into the ear canal(s) and then pump the small part in front of the ear canal several times to help push the drops into the ears. If your child has extreme pain with the ear drops (rare), please stop using them and call the office. Keep the ear dry until drainage has stopped. If the drainage continues after 5-7 days of treatment, call the office at 404-255-2033 for an appointment to be seen.

FOLLOW UP:

Your child needs to be seen 4-6 weeks after surgery to check the ear tubes and repeat a hearing test (if needed). Follow up visits for ear tube checks will be scheduled with a Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant, who will involve the physician as needed. After the initial follow-up visit, we will see your child every 6 months (or as directed) for an ear tube recheck until the tubes fall out. In general, the care will be similar to the instructions presented in this teaching sheet.

**Call your physician if you have any questions/concerns about how your child looks or feels after surgery. Office phone number of Pediatric ENT of Atlanta is 404-255-2033.*

**In the case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911
or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**