

Tympanostomy Tubes

Treatment

- Tympanostomy tubes are most commonly placed for chronic or recurrent middle ear infections. These tubes provide a conduit between the external ear canal and the middle ear.
- Using tubes, pressure and fluid may be released from the middle ear. Conversely, medicated ear drops may be instilled in the middle ear to treat infection and inflammation.
- Tympanostomy tubes help avoid repeated courses of oral/systemic antibiotics in children.
- Repeated courses of oral/systemic antibiotics have been linked to near-term side effects like yeast infection and diarrhea and have more recently been shown to correlate with long-term health issues like obesity and asthma
- Your child will undergo a brief anesthetic using a mask and gas anesthesia. Usually no IV or breathing tube is required.
- A small incision is made in the eardrum to insert the silicone tube. Excess middle ear fluid is suctioned and topical ear drops are instilled.

What should we expect after tympanostomy tube placement?

- If your child had hearing loss before surgery, normal sounds may seem loud due to the immediate improvement in hearing.
- Anesthesia may take a few hours to wear off. Most children are recovered by the time they leave the hospital or surgery center. Your child should be able to progress to a normal diet when you return home.
- Your child will be prescribed ear drops after surgery. These are meant to keep the tubes clear and help treat drainage.
- A post-operative appointment with a hearing test is usually recommended three to four weeks after surgery. In addition, to continue to provide continuity of care for your child, post-operative appointments will usually be recommended every six months, as long as the tubes remain in the ear (6 month to 2 years).

What are some reasons we should contact our doctor after surgery?

- Drainage of middle ear fluid may be seen for two to three days following surgery. This fluid can be clear, reddish, or bloody. However, if this drainage continues beyond three days, your doctor should be contacted.
- Fever greater than 101 F
- Drainage from the ear after placement of tubes usually indicates an infection and needs to be treated. Initiate antibiotic ear drops and make an appointment to see your primary care or ENT physician.
- Your ENT specialist should be contacted if two or more infections occur between scheduled office visits or if there is suspicion of the tube being plugged.