



Ear Tubes Post-Operative Care

Expectations

- Tubes typically last 6-18 months unless more permanent T-tubes were placed.
- Most tubes fall out on their own. If they do not come out on their own, they may need to be removed by your doctor.
- Drainage from the ears is common after surgery. You will be started on ear drops by your physician. The drops will be given to you before you leave the hospital on the day of surgery.
- If there is fluid in your ears prior to surgery, everything will be loud after the tubes have been placed. Such a shift in volume can be startling to your child. Keep the radio/TV volume low immediately after surgery.
- Plan to see your doctor back every 4-6 months. They will assess the tubes to ensure that they are still in place and functioning.

Activity

- Children may return to school or day-care the day after surgery.
- Physical education and sports can be resumed the day after surgery.

Water Precautions

- Ear plugs are not necessary for swimming or bathing after tubes. Water will not typically go through the tube during swimming.
- Ear plugs may be necessary for the following situations:
 - o Ear pain or discomfort with swimming
 - o Drainage from the ear canal
 - o Swimming deeper than 6 ft under water
 - o Lake or ocean swimming
- There are a variety of soft, fitted ear plugs available. Silicone, moldable plugs are very effective, e.g. Mack's ear plugs. Neoprene headbands can also be used to cover the ears while swimming.
- Avoid bubble baths or soapy water as this will decrease.

Medications

- You may resume your preoperative medications unless otherwise specified by your doctor.
- Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen are effective for pain control after surgery.
- Ear Drops
 - o Apply _____ drops two times a day for _____ days.

Ear Infections with Tubes

- You may still get ear infections with tubes in place. When an infection occurs, the ear may drain and smell badly.
- Drainage from the ear is an indicator that the tube is working. Allowing the infection to drain from the ear is a good thing!
- Drainage can be clear, cloudy, or bloody.
- Ear drops are the most effective way to treat infections when there are tubes in place. Typically ofloxacin or ciprofloxacin/dexamethasone drops are used twice daily for about 10 days. Lie on your side with the affected ear facing up. Apply the drops to the ear and the pump the skin flap (tragus) over the ear canal several times to push the drops into the ear.
- Prior to applying the drops clean the ear. Rid the ear canal of as much drainage as possible with a thin washcloth or cotton ball. Absorb as much of the drainage as possible. You can try using an infant nasal aspirator to gently suction the drainage.
- When there is an active infection with drainage, keep the ear dry. Use a cotton ball coated with Vaseline to cover the opening of the ear canal when bathing. Do not submerge your head underwater with an active infection.
- Oral antibiotics are not typically needed for ear infections when the tubes are in place and functioning properly. Occasionally they may be needed if you are very ill or the ear drops have not been effective.

Follow-up

- You will be scheduled for a follow-up 3-4 weeks after surgery.
- While tubes are in place, you will be seen every 4-6 months.

Call Lakeside ENT & Allergy at 585 - 394 - 8800 if you develop any of the following symptoms:

- Persistent drainage that is not responding to drops
- Fever >101.5
- Poorly controlled pain