



CARE OF PATIENT AT HOME AFTER MYRINGOTOMY AND PE TUBE PLACEMENT

The back of the nose and the middle ear are connected by a tube. This is called the “Eustachian Tube”. There is one tube for each ear. This tube has three purposes: to drain the ear, to allow air into the ear, and to protect the ear. In many young children, the tube does not function properly. When this happens, an infection of the middle ear may occur. With the “Myringotomy and PE Tube” Placement, a tiny tube is inserted into the eardrum. This lets air into the ear and also allows the ear to drain. However, the tube does not protect the ear. Without protection, water can enter the middle ear and you can get an ear infection. Earplugs are needed whenever you swim, wash your hair, or get the head wet. The artificial tube bypasses the Eustachian tube and will usually last 6-9 months. With these tubes in place, you will have fewer ear infections and better hearing.

DRAINAGE

The ears(s) may drain for 2-3 days after surgery. This drainage may be any color such as clear, yellow, clear pink or may even be bloody. If ear drops are prescribed, please use as directed.

PAIN

Most patients do not have pain after this procedure. If needed, Tylenol® given every 4 hours according to the package directions should give relief and keep you comfortable.

FEVER

Some patients have a low-grade fever after this procedure. Give Tylenol® according to the package directions which should reduce the fever. Call the doctor if the temperature is higher than 101°F. or 38.4°C.

ACTIVITY

There are no restrictions after this procedure but remember to wear earplugs when swimming and bathing. Scuba diving is not allowed while the tubes are in place.

EAR PROTECTION

With the myringotomy, a hole is made in the eardrum and this hole is kept open with an artificial tube. Water can enter the ear through this hole and they must be protected from water. There are three ways to protect the ear(s):

- 1.) Take a small piece of cotton and coat it with Vaseline. Insert it into the ear(s). This may be used when showering, bathing, or washing the hair.

2.) Mack's Pillow Soft Ear Plugs® are sold over-the-counter at many drug stores. These are very effective and inexpensive. Break each plug into 3-4 pieces. Roll each piece of the silicone into the size of a long jelly bean, long thin oval rather than round. Gently pull on the outer ear back and up. This straightens the ear canal for insertion. Gently insert the plug just to cover the ear canal opening, not deep into the ear canal. The piece of silicone should be wide enough to block the ear canal. This will prevent water from entering the ear canal and the middle ear. Remove plugs after use. They may be saved and re-used. These earplugs may be used when bathing, showering, washing hair, surface swimming and shallow diving. (No scuba diving.)

Custom-molded earplugs. Sometimes, the cotton and the soft earplugs are not enough. If necessary, our Audiologist can make custom-mold earplugs specifically for you. These floatable earplugs work well. Connect the two plugs with a heavy string, which will help you to find the plug if one should pop out of the ear. The Audiology Department can be reached at 708-216-3821 to schedule your appointment.

EAR INFECTIONS

Patients with PE tubes can still get ear infections. However, the PE tubes will decrease the number of infections and the ear infections will also be less severe. Some patients will have no infections while the tubes are in place. For patients with tubes, the usual sign of ear infection is drainage. It is possible that you will not have a fever or pain. If you have ear drainage, please call your family doctor or contact the ENT Department at 708-216-3664. This needs to be treated.

FOLLOW-UP VISITS

You need to be seen in our office 2-4 weeks after the procedure. At that office visit, your ears will be examined. An audiogram may be repeated at that time. Regular ear check-ups are very important. Over time the PE tube may be pushed out into the ear canal. This is normal. You may not know when the tube falls out. This will be detected by your doctor. If significant ear infections re-occur, the tube may need to be replaced.

CALL THE DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:

1.) Eardrops were not ordered and ear drainage last more than 3 days after the procedure.

Ear drainage begins anytime after the third day after the procedure.

Fever not controlled by Tylenol®.

If you should have any questions or concerns, please call your doctor at 708-216-9183 Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. At night and on weekends, please contact the Physicians' Answering Service (24 hours) at 708-216-8000 and/or call the Loyola University Medical Center Emergency Department at 708-216-3882, or go to an Emergency Room which is closest to you.