

# Tympanoplasty / Myringoplasty: Instructions After Surgery

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## **What should I expect right after surgery?**

Most children recover from the effects of this minor ear surgery and the anesthesia quickly, since the procedure is so short. Some children are cranky for several hours or even days, from a combination of the stress of the experience, the lingering effects of the anesthetic, and mild pain in the ears from the operation. A slight fever is commonly seen, but this is also expected and generally does not require treatment. If your child is significantly upset, sick or has a fever by the second day after surgery, contact me or your pediatrician. If your child has had a graft taken from an incision **behind** the ear, let me know if this area becomes significantly swollen, tender or starts to drain.

## **What medication is necessary after the surgery?**

Children getting minor ear procedures are usually given Tylenol (acetaminophen) as a suppository while under anesthesia. This ensures that they will have some pain medication in their systems by the time that they wake up. They are given a fairly large dose, so **do not give them more Tylenol until at least 6 hours** after the surgery if this has been done (the anesthesiologist will let you know). If they are in pain despite the Tylenol, ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) can also be used, alternating with Tylenol. Generally, no antibiotics or ear drops are necessary after this surgery.

## **What can I expect during the healing phase?**

I fill the ear canal with an antibiotic ointment in addition to the absorbable Gelfoam packing material to help the eardrum heal. This will give your child a clogged sensation in the ears, which will go away over the next few weeks as the ointment drains out and the packing absorbs. **It is normal** to see this ointment or a small amount of blood draining from the ears, just wipe it away with a tissue if necessary.

## **Can my child swim, shower or bathe after surgery? Are earplugs necessary? How about air travel?**

The ears should be kept dry until I have seen your child and confirmed healing of the eardrums. That is, avoid getting water into the ear canal. This can be done by keeping your child's head above water in a bath, or using a cotton ball soaked with Bacitracin ointment as a loosely fitting plug during showering. Custom, fitted or hard rubber or plastic earplugs should not be used, since they require pressure to fit tightly and can disrupt healing. Also, do not use earplugs designed for sound protection which require insertion into the ear canal.

If your child had a formal tympanoplasty involving an incision behind the eardrum to obtain an eardrum graft, they should avoid air travel until I have seen them and confirmed that healing is complete. If the operation was a simple myringoplasty (a short case done when removing a retained ear tube, with no incision behind the ear), then air travel is OK. If there is any question about this, feel free to contact me to clarify.

## **What about follow up?**

Patients should be seen 3-4 weeks after surgery, to confirm healing of the eardrum. Please call my office to schedule this follow up visit.

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

MD / RN

Date: \_\_\_\_\_