



Department of Otolaryngology

www.connecticutchildrens.org

860.545.9650

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS TYMPANOSTOMY TUBES

How will I know if my child has an ear infection after the tubes are in place?

Tubes help to reduce the frequency and severity of ear infections, but do not eliminate infections completely. If your child develops an ear infection with tubes in place, you will see a discharge from the ear. This discharge may have a foul odor.

An infection should be treated with drops. Call our office or your child's primary care physician for a prescription. If the drainage continues for over one week, your child may need to be examined in the office.

My child had tubes inserted two days ago and there is blood coming out of the ear(s). Is this normal?

Yes. Remember that the eardrum had to be cut to make the hole for the tube, so there can be oozing or bleeding for a few days after surgery. This is one of the reasons for using the eardrops after surgery. Keep in mind that a little blood can look like a lot in a small ear, but it is rarely enough to cause a serious problem.

Will my child be able to go to school, to gym class or to a party the day after surgery?

Yes. Your child may resume full activities the day after surgery.

Can my child fly in an airplane with tubes?

Yes. In fact, a child with tubes will have less trouble on an airplane than a person without tubes, because the tubes will equalize pressure.

Do tubes cause hearing loss?

No, they do not.

My child had tubes inserted last week, and he/she seems sensitive to noises. Is that normal?

Yes. Many children who need tubes have thick fluid behind their eardrums that muffles sounds. Once the fluid is removed and the tube is placed, sounds are no longer muffled and may seem louder to your child. It shouldn't be long before your child gets used to the difference.

My child had tubes inserted a few months ago. Today, there is green stuff coming out of his/her ears mixed with some blood. Is this normal?

This type of drainage is common in a child with tubes and indicates an ear infection is present that needs to be treated. Contact your pediatrician for instructions on treatment with antibiotic eardrops and/or an oral antibiotic.

My child has tubes. He/she has a fever and is complaining of ear pain. What should I do?

If this should happen before your 4-6 week post-op visit, call our office at 860.545.9650. If it is after the post-op visit, call your child's pediatrician. It is possible for your child to have a fever and ear pain without an ear infection. Remember, if the tubes are in place and are not plugged, there will be drainage in the case of an ear infection. Otherwise, the tube(s) may be plugged or may have to come out, so your child is experiencing more of the same symptoms as he/she had before the tubes we placed.

What kinds of ear plugs are available for swimming?

Most children with tubes will not need ear plugs. However, ear plugs are recommended when a child is diving more than six feet into water, swimming in non-chlorinated water (lakes, ponds, ocean, etc.) and for frequent drainage after water exposure.

There are several ear plug options:

- Silicone "dots" are commercially available in most drug stores, or in other stores with pool supplies. They are inexpensive and should come with directions for use. If silicon-type plugs do not stay in, there are neoprene headbands made for use with the plugs.
- Pre-formed silicone ear plugs come in a variety of sizes and are fit to your child's ear. If they do not stay in, a neoprene headband can be used with the plugs.
- Custom-molded ear plugs are made by an audiologist and are the most expensive option. Custom earplugs tend to stay in the best, although as your child grows, he/she may grow out of them and need