



Greenville Ear, Nose & Throat

Ventilation Tubes Care

Instructions for Patients With Ventilation Tubes

1. After tubes have been placed, use antibiotic eardrops (4 drops in each ear 3 times daily for 3-5 days or as directed by your surgeon).
2. A small amount of bloody drainage is not unusual during the first few days after the operation. Brisk bleeding should be reported to the doctor.
3. Tylenol should be sufficient for postoperative discomfort.
4. It is very important that water be prevented from entering the ear canal because this occurrence can lead to infection. Keep ear canals dry when bathing or swimming by placing earplugs into the ears.
5. If ear canals accidentally get wet, insert 4 drops of antibiotic drops once that day to prevent infection.
6. Ear infections after tube placement should be less frequent and less severe, but they still may occur. Foul-smelling drainage, ear pain, bleeding or fever will alert you to the possibility of an infection. Your doctor should be notified. If it is within the first 30 days following tube placement, notify the ear, nose and throat specialist so that he can arrange an evaluation. Unless otherwise specified by your primary care physician (family practitioner or pediatrician), problems that develop after 30 days of tube placement usually are handled by him or her to maintain continuity of care. Your ear, nose and throat specialist always is available should your primary care physician feel that the problem needs special attention.
7. It is not unusual for bloody drainage to occur with an ear infection or when tubes extrude from the tympanic membrane. If bloody drainage occurs, antibiotic eardrops should be started (4 drops 3 times daily), and the doctor should be notified within 48 hours.
8. Patients are required to follow up with their ear, nose and throat physician every six months for routine tube checks. These checkups are extremely important to make sure that the tubes are functioning properly and that there are no complications related to placement of the ventilation tubes. It is the patient's or parent's responsibility to make sure these tube check appointments are kept. As mentioned before, problems that develop between tube check appointments are most appropriately handled by the primary care physician.
9. Never put any object or liquid (other than that prescribed by your doctor) into your ears.
10. Most ear tubes are temporary (lasting between 6-18 months) and fall out on their own. If a tube is noticed in the ear canal, it should be removed by the doctor.
11. The initial follow-up visit is scheduled with the doctor 2-3 weeks following the surgery. Please call to confirm your follow-up appointment.