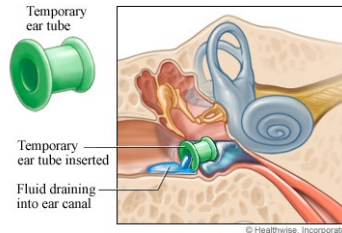


Ear Tubes: Before Your Child's Surgery



What is ear tube surgery?

Ear tubes are plastic and are shaped like a hollow spool. They help clear fluid from your child's middle ear. Doctors suggest tubes for children who have repeat ear infections or when fluid stays behind the eardrum.

During the surgery, the doctor makes a hole in the eardrum and inserts a tube. The tube helps fluid drain.

Most of the time, children recover quickly and have little pain or other symptoms after the surgery. Your child will probably be able to go back to school or child care the next day.

Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

How do you prepare for surgery?

Surgery can be stressful for both your child and you. This information will help you understand what you can expect. And it will help you safely prepare for your child's surgery.



Preparing for surgery

- Talk to your child about the surgery. Tell your child that the surgery will help the ear problem. Hospitals know how to take care of children. The staff will do all they can to make it easier for your child.
- Ask if a special tour of the surgery area and hospital is available. This may make your child feel less nervous about what happens.
- Plan for your child's recovery time. He or she may need more of your time right after the surgery, both for care and for comfort.

- Understand exactly what surgery is planned, along with the risks, benefits, and other options.
- Tell the doctor ALL the medicines and natural health products your child takes. Some may increase the risk of problems during the surgery. Your doctor will tell you if your child should stop taking any of them before the surgery and how soon to do it.

The day before surgery

- A nurse may call you (or you may need to call the hospital). This is to confirm the time and date of your child's surgery and answer any questions.
- Remember to follow your doctor's instructions about your child taking or stopping medicines before surgery. This includes over-the-counter medicines.



- **Stop eating at midnight. This is very important!**
 - Stop eating and drinking all non-clear fluids at midnight. This is very important
 - You may DRINK CLEAR FLUIDS ONLY up to 3 hours before surgery. This includes BLACK coffee, tea, Gatorade, apple juice and water.

-

What happens on the day of surgery?

Follow the instructions exactly about when your child should stop eating and drinking. If you don't, the surgery may be cancelled. If the doctor told you to have your child take his or her medicines on the day of surgery, have your child take them with only a sip of water.

- Have your child take a bath or shower before you come in. Do not apply lotion or deodorant.
- Your child may brush his or her teeth. But tell your child not to swallow any toothpaste or water.
- Do not let your child wear contact lenses. Bring your child's glasses or contact lens case.
- Be sure your child has something that reminds him or her of home. A special stuffed animal, toy, or blanket may be comforting. For an older child, it might be a book or music.

At the hospital

- A parent or legal guardian must accompany your child.

- Your child will be kept comfortable and safe by the anesthesia provider. Your child will be asleep during the surgery.
- The surgery will take about 15 minutes.
- After surgery, your child will be taken to the recovery room. As your child wakes up, the recovery room staff will monitor his or her condition. The doctor will talk to you about the surgery.

When should you call your doctor?

- You have questions or concerns.
- You don't understand how to prepare your child for the surgery.
- Your child becomes ill before the surgery (such as fever, influenza (flu), or a cold).
- You need to reschedule or have changed your mind about your child having the surgery.

Ear Tube Surgery in Children: What to Expect at Home

Your Child's Recovery

Most children have little pain after ear tube placement and usually recover quickly.

Your child will feel tired for a day. But your child should be able to go back to school or daycare the day after surgery.

Your child will need to see the doctor regularly to make sure the tubes are working. The doctor also will check your child's hearing.

Make sure your child does not get water in their ears, that includes swimming unless an ear band or earplugs are worn.

How can you care for your child at home?



Activity

- Your child will probably be able to go back to school or daycare on the day after surgery.
- Your child needs to take extra care to keep water from getting in the ears when bathing or swimming. Your child may need to wear earplugs. Check with your doctor to find out what he or she recommends.



Medicines

- Your doctor will tell you if and when your child can restart his or her medicines. The doctor will also give you instructions about your child taking any new medicines.
- Be safe with medicines. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
 - If the doctor gave your child a prescription medicine for pain, give it as prescribed.
 - Use ear drops **ONLY** when prescribed by the doctor.
- If the doctor prescribed antibiotics for your child, give them as directed. Do not stop giving them just because your child feels better. Your child needs to take the full course of antibiotics.

Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor or seek immediate medical care if:

- Your child has pain that does not get better after he or she takes pain medicine.
- Your child has signs of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
 - Pus draining from the ear.
 - A fever.