



This Family Education Sheet gives you information on how to care for your child at home after an ear tube placement.

Will my child need ear drops after surgery?

- Yes. You will be given a bottle of antibiotic eardrops to use for 3 days after surgery unless instructed otherwise.
- Only give your child drops prescribed by your child's health care provider. Don't use any other eardrops in the ear (example: no drops to soften earwax).

What do I do if my child's ears drain fluid?

Ear drainage is common in the days, weeks or months after tube placement, and it's not an emergency. It can be many different colors, including clear, white, yellow, green, orange, tan and/or bloody. We recommend ear drops as treatment.

If there is drainage:

- Use the antibiotic ear drops that were provided after the surgery 5 drops twice a day.
- After you restart the drops, call (617) 355-7147 during office hours (Monday– Friday 8:00am–4:30pm) to tell your child's provider about the continued drainage.
- You may also call during office hours for a refill of ear drops if needed.

Can my child swim or take a bath with ear tubes?

- It's OK to get the ear wet during bathing and swimming after ear tube placement unless your child's surgeon tells you otherwise.
- If water makes your child uncomfortable, you can plug the ears with a piece of a cotton ball that has been thoroughly smeared with Vaseline. Or you can use ear plugs when showering or washing the hair.

Can my child be active after the surgery?

- Your child may go back to normal activities after fully recovering from anesthesia.
- Your child may return to school or daycare the day after surgery.

Can my child fly on an airplane?

Yes. Your child may fly in an airplane.

Can my child eat as usual at home?

Yes.

Will my child be in pain?

- Children usually have a little pain after ear tube placement.
- You may give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) for pain, discomfort or a fever. Follow the directions on the package. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand.
- Only give your child pain medicine if your doctor tells you it's OK to do so. Always talk to your child's doctor about allergies your child may have before giving over-the-counter medications.

How do I give eardrops?

Some children don't like eardrops. Try warming the drops to body temperature before putting them in. You can do this by rolling the bottle between the palms of your hands or by putting the bottle in your pocket for 15-20 minutes.

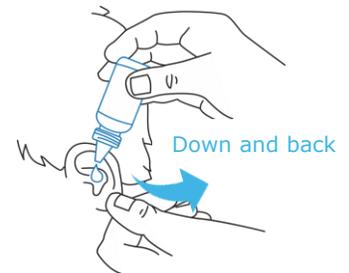


Figure 1.

- Tilt the ear up or have your child rest on their side.
 - Gently pull the earlobe downward to open the ear canal (see Figure 1.)
- Gently press on the small skin flap over the ear a few times to help the drops run into the ear canal (see Figure 2.)
- If possible, let your child lie on their side for a few minutes to help the drops stay in place.



Figure 2.

When does my child need a follow-up appointment?

- Your child should have an appointment with your health care provider 4–8 weeks after the ear tubes are placed. If you don't know if you have an appointment or if you need to make an appointment call (617) 355-6462.
- Your child will then have appointments every 6–12 months for as long as the ear tubes are in place. These appointments are important so the doctor can check on the status of your child's ear tubes.

When should I call my child's doctor?

Call your child's doctor if:

- Your child has a fever higher than 101.5°F/38.6°C for longer than 24 hours after surgery
- Your child has pain that doesn't get better after taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- You have any questions or concerns

Contact us

Monday – Friday: 8:00am – 4:30pm

- ORL Nursing Line: (617) 355-7147

For emergencies on evenings, nights, and weekends:

- Hospital page operator : (617) 355-6369
- Ask to page the ORL resident on call

This Family Education Sheet is available in [Spanish](#).