Caring for Your Child  
Discharge Instructions: Myringotomy with Tube Placement (Ear Tubes)

About Ear Tubes:

Ear tubes, also called tympanostomy tubes, pressure-equalizing or ventilating tubes or grommets, are placed to help maintain normal middle ear pressure. They work by allowing air to pass into the middle ear, thus releasing pressure, “ventilating” the middle ear space and allowing fluid to drain down the Eustachian tube (See Figure 2). An ear tube is a very small cylinder-shaped tube made of silicone (See Figure 1). Ear tubes are temporary and are expected to fall out on their own, usually within 6-12 months.

About the Operation:

Going through the ear canal (See Figure 2), your surgeon will make a small incision in the ear drum and place the tube in the opening made by the incision. If fluid is present, it will be removed at that time (See Figure 3). After the ear tube is placed in the ear drum (See Figure 4) the opening of the ear tube will allow air to enter the middle ear. The procedure lasts about 10 minutes. You will not see the incision or the tube after surgery.

Common Reasons for Ear Tubes:

- Difficulty hearing due to fluid in the ear
- Frequent ear infections with remaining fluid after an ear infection
- Children with or those at risk for speech, language or learning problems who also have frequent ear infections or persistent middle ear fluid.

Once the fluid is removed from the middle ear, hearing is expected to return to normal.
If your child already has hearing loss, removing the fluid will return your child’s hearing to baseline, so that he can maximize hearing and language development.

**What to Expect After the Operation:**

Your child may complain of some ear pain on the day of the operation. Your child should feel better the following day after rest and acetaminophen (Tylenol®) as needed. You might see drainage from the ears; it can last up to 5 days. The drainage can look watery, like cloudy mucus or blood-tinged. You will receive a prescription for an antibiotic ear drop put in the ears.

**Diet and Activity:**

Once you are home, give your child a light meal followed by his normal diet. Your child may return to school or daycare and regular activities the day after the procedure.

**Follow-up after Surgery:**

After you get home from surgery, call ENT to schedule a follow-up visit for 4-6 weeks after the surgery.

**Continued ENT Follow-up:**

We strongly recommend continued follow-up with ENT as long as your child has tubes in place and until the tubes fall out. Routine ENT follow-up is every 6 months until the tubes fall out.

**Call the ENT Office if:**

- Ear drainage lasts longer than 5 days after surgery
- The ear drops are not going down
- Your child complains of constant ear pain (within 24 hours after surgery)
- Your child has a temperature greater than 101.3°F or 38.5°C taken under the arm within 24 hours after surgery
- You have any questions or concerns

**Phone Number for Questions or Emergencies:**

- 215-590-3440

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