

## Caring for Your Child After Tympanoplasty

Tympanoplasty is surgery performed on the eardrum or the space behind the eardrum. It may involve placing a tissue patch to help close a hole in the eardrum. This surgery may be fixing damage to the ear caused by a birth defect, infection, trauma, or other disease.

### What to Expect

- There may be blood-stained drainage from your child's ear for up to 2 weeks.
- There may be a small incision behind, in front of, or above the ear.
- A gauze dressing may cover the ear. You will be told when it may be removed.
- They may have packing in their ear. This will need to be removed by the doctor. The doctor will tell you this after surgery.
- Your child may have decreased hearing several weeks.
- As packing material dissolves, they may complain of a "popping" feeling or fluctuation of hearing.
- They may feel dizzy for about a week.
- Some taste changes are common.
- Your child may have soreness or stiffness in the jaw. This will go away.
- Restless sleep or nightmares may occur for a couple of weeks.

### Pain

Your child may have some pain. Use any pain medicine as ordered.

### Incision Care

- Keep the incision behind the ear dry for two days. After two days, clean the incision as advised.
- Water **must** be kept out of the ear until advised by your doctor. When showering, use a Vaseline® covered cotton ball to keep the ear canal dry.
- After the dressing is off, use a cotton ball in their ear as long as drainage continues. Change it as needed. Once the ear is no longer draining, stop using the cotton ball.

### Activity

- **Do not** let your child lay flat in bed for the next 48 hours. Use at least 2 pillows to raise their head 30°. Your child should not lay on the treated side until your doctor approves.
- They should avoid quick head movements.
- **No** sports, jogging, swimming, aerobics, heavy exercise or lifting over 25 pounds for 4 weeks.
- **No** blowing the nose for 1 week. After 1 week, your child can gently blow it one side at a time to avoid pressure on the ears.
- Your child should keep their mouth open when sneezing or coughing for one week.
- **No** air travel for 4-6 weeks until approved by your doctor.
- **No** driving (if old enough) while taking any pain medicine.

### Follow up Visit

Your child will have a follow up visit in 4 weeks. If packing needs to be removed, it may be sooner.

Your child will have a hearing test and exam about 3 months after surgery. The doctor will talk with you about your child's progress and answer any questions.

### **When to Call**

- Bleeding that soaks gauze dressing in 10 minutes or less
- A fever over 102°
- Sudden dizziness
- Big change in hearing
- Signs of infection
  - swelling
  - increased redness
  - increased pain
  - pus-like drainage

### **Who to Call**

UW Health Pediatric Otolaryngology (ENT) Clinic

Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm  
**(608) 263-6420, option 3**

After clinic hours, weekends, and holidays, the number above will give you the paging operator. Ask for the ENT doctor on-call. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

The toll-free number is **1-800-323-8942**.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 2/2021. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5421.