

Caring for Your Child After Tympanoplasty

Tympanoplasty is a surgery to repair the eardrum or the space behind it. This surgery helps fix damage to the ear caused by a birth defect, infection, trauma, or other disease.

During the surgery, the surgeon places a tissue patch to help close the hole in the eardrum. To do this, the surgeon makes a small incision either behind, in front of, or above your ear.

Incision Care

Keep the incision behind the ear dry for 48 hours. After 48 hours, clean the incision by rinsing and gently patting the skin with soap and water.

Do not scrub the incision for 2 weeks after surgery, or as directed by your surgeon at discharge.

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.

There will be packing material in your child's ear that may cause decreased hearing for several weeks. Your child may notice a "popping" feeling/sound as packing material dissolves and their hearing may vary.

Drainage

You may notice bloody drainage from your child's ear for up to 2 weeks. A gauze dressing may cover the ear. You will be told when to remove the dressing.

After the dressing is off, use a cotton ball if drainage continues. Change it as needed. Once the ear is no longer draining, stop using the cotton ball.

Pain

Your child may have temporary soreness or stiffness in the jaw. Your child may also have some pain in the ear. Use pain medicine as directed.

Sleep

Do not let your child lay flat in bed for the next 48 hours. Use at least 2 pillows to raise their head 30 degrees. Your child should not lay on the treated side until your doctor approves.

Restless sleep or nightmares may occur for a couple of weeks.

Restrictions

Avoid quick head movements.

No sports, jogging, swimming, aerobics, heavy exercise or lifting over 25 pounds for 4 weeks.

Your child may feel dizzy for about a week.

No blowing the nose for 1 week. After 1 week, your child can gently blow their nose one side at a time to avoid pressure on the ears.

Your child should keep their mouth open when sneezing or coughing for 1 week.

Diet

Some taste changes are common.

Travel

No air travel for 4-6 weeks until approved by your child's doctor. **No** driving (if old enough) while taking any pain medicine.

Follow up Visits

Your child will have a follow up visit in 4 weeks. If your child needs the packing removed, we will call to schedule another clinic visit.

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

Call the clinic right away if you notice:

- Bleeding that soaks gauze dressing in 10 minutes or less
- Fever over 102°
- Sudden dizziness
- Big change in hearing
- Signs of infection
 - Swelling
 - Increased redness
 - Increased pain
 - Pus-like drainage

Who to Call

If your child was seen for their pre-op appointment in the Pediatric ENT Clinic in Madison at the American Family Children's Hospital, please call **(608) 915-0470**, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

If your child was seen for their pre-op appointment in the Pediatric ENT Clinic in Rockford at the Women and Children's Hospital, please call **(779) 696-8499**, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

If your child was seen for their pre-op appointment at 1 S. Park ENT, please call **608-287-2500**, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

After hours, weekends or holidays, please call the Madison/American Family Children's Hospital phone number. This number will give you the paging operator. Ask for the otolaryngology (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 © 11/2025. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5421.