

Caring for Your Child After an Adenoidectomy, Myringotomy and Tube Placement

Your child had surgery to help improve chronic ear problems. The adenoid is in the back of the nose. It can cause problems with eustachian tube function. The eustachian tube drains fluid from the middle ear space, which is behind the eardrum, to the back of the nose. This helps balance the pressure in the ears. It is what allows you to “pop” your ears when you yawn or swallow in an elevator or an airplane. Removing the adenoid helps this tube function more normally.

Myringotomy and tube placement creates a temporary opening in the eardrum with the tube. This allows for instant balance of pressure and helps any fluid in the ear to dry up or drain out.

What to Expect

- A mild sore throat for up to a week.
- A small amount of bloody drainage from the nose is common.
- A low-grade fever up to 102° F that can last up to 7 days.
- Neck pain for up to 10 days. A warm heating pad (**not hot**), soaking in a warm bath, or massaging the neck may help.
- Foul smelling breath for 2 to 3 weeks.
- Nasal-sounding voice and/or snoring. This will go away in time. If it lasts longer than 3 months, tell your doctor.
- Restless sleep or nightmares for a couple of weeks.
- It is common for children to have a little drainage from the ear for 1 to 3 days after surgery. The drainage may be bloody, clear, or pus-like.

Nasal Sprays and Rinses

Your surgeon may provide instructions to give your child nasal saline sprays or rinses. Please follow those instructions and call us with any questions or concerns.

Ear Drops

Your child will be prescribed ear drops that should be given 3 times a day for 3 days, or as prescribed. Warm the drops in your hand or pocket for a few minutes. This may make the drops more comfortable for your child.

Diet

Your child may feel sick to their stomach from the anesthesia. Start with clear liquids. Add solid food, as your child can handle it. If they vomit, start over with clear liquids.

Have your child drink plenty of fluids. Give liquids often, even if they are just sips.

Pain

Your doctor may suggest giving acetaminophen (Tylenol) along with ibuprofen, as needed. You will be told the dosage for these on the day of surgery.

Activity

Your child may go back to school or daycare in 2 to 5 days if they feel well. They can take part in normal routines as soon as they feel able.

Most children do not need ear plugs. If your child has ear pain or drainage after swimming, please contact our clinic.

Follow-up

Your child will need a hearing test and ENT follow-up visit 1-3 months after surgery at the Pediatric ENT Clinic. Then, your child will see ENT every 6 months until the tubes come out.

Tube Care

It is normal for ears to drain from time to time while tubes are in place. This drainage tells us there is fluid in the middle ear space. This could cause infection if not treated. The drainage may be clear, yellow, white, green, brown, or bloody. Bloody drainage does not concern us any more than the other colors of drainage. We just treat it with a different type of ear drop.

Any time your child's ears drain, they need to be treated with ear drops. The ENT clinic will manage all ear drainage once tubes are placed. Call the clinic or send us a MyChart message. **You should not contact your child's PCP or urgent care for ear drainage with ear tubes.**

Once you have the ear drop medicine, you may treat your child's ear drainage and reach out to us on the next business day to report it.

Please follow the steps on your "What to Do when Your Child Has Ear Drainage" flowchart.

When to Call

Call your child's clinic if you notice these symptoms within 7 days of surgery:

- Nausea and vomiting that doesn't go away.
- Fever over 102° F.
- Bleeding from the nose or mouth that doesn't stop.
- Pain that doesn't go away after taking Tylenol® and ibuprofen.
- Ear pain that lasts more than 3 days.
- Ear drainage doesn't go away after finishing the ear drops.

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) 263-6420, option 3**, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am – 4:30 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.

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 © 4/2024 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5849