

Tympanoplasty

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A tympanoplasty is surgery done on the eardrum or the middle ear hearing bones. It may involve doing a tissue patch to help close a hole in the eardrum. It may also involve repair of the middle ear hearing bones.

What to Expect

You may feel some ear pain or pressure. You may have soreness or stiffness when moving your jaw. This will get better over time. It's helpful to eat soft foods.

You may have an incision behind, in front of, or above your ear. A band-aid may cover your incision. You may have a larger dressing held in place with a Velcro headband (mastoid dressing). You will have a cotton ball in the bowl of your ear. There may be blood-stained drainage from your ear for a few days. Some drainage may last for 1-2 weeks.

You may have packing inside your ear canal. The packing may dissolve, or it will be removed at your first follow up visit. It may look dark red or black on your cotton ball, this is normal.

Because of the dressing, any packing, or swelling, it may be harder to hear. It may take 3-6 months for your hearing to improve. Your doctor will let you know when to have your hearing rechecked.

It's normal to hear some popping or crackling noises.

You may feel dizzy or unsteady after surgery. This is common the first week. If it is severe contact the clinic.

You may have some taste changes. This can last for several months.

Care After Surgery

We will give you a prescription for opioid pain medicine. Use this if needed. You can also use Tylenol (acetaminophen). Please check with your surgeon before using any NSAID such as ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, Aleve or naproxen. Use a stool softener if you are taking an opioid pain medicine. Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking opioids.

You should leave the bandage in place for 24 hours. If you have a Velcro type headband holding your dressing in place you can loosen the band and reattach it if it feels too tight. You can use the headband at night for comfort.

Change the cotton ball daily and as often as needed until the drainage has stopped. **You do not need to keep using the cotton ball if you do not have drainage from your ear.**

The incision can get wet after **two** days, but you must keep water out of your ear until advised by your doctor. When you shower, use a petroleum jelly (Vaseline)[®] covered cotton ball in the bowl of your ear to seal the canal and keep your ear canal dry. No swimming.

If you have packing inside your ear canal, **do not try to remove it.** You may notice some packing material on your cotton ball when you change it. Use ear drops as directed by your doctor.

Limits

- Only light activity for **4** weeks or as your doctor instructs. This means no jogging, aerobics, or lifting more than 25 pounds.
- For the next 48 hours, raise your head at least 30° when you lie down. Use at least 2 pillows. Do not lie on the side of your treated ear.
- Avoid quick head movements or standing up quickly. This may make you dizzy.
- Do not blow your nose for 1 week. After 1 week, if you must blow your nose, do it gently one side at a time to avoid pressure on your ears.
- For the first week, sneeze or cough only with your mouth open.
- Check with your doctor about air travel. You may not be able to travel by air for 4-6 weeks.

When to Call

Please call your doctor if you have:

- Bleeding that soaks through 6 gauze dressings or cotton balls in one hour.
- A fever greater than 100.5° F taken by mouth.
- Sudden severe dizzy feeling.
- A large decrease in your hearing.
- Increased swelling, redness, pain, or drainage from the wound.
- Any questions or problems.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

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 © 7/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4919

Who to Call

University Hospital ENT Clinic call
(608) 263-6190

1 S. Park St ENT Clinic
(608) 287-2500

After 5:00 pm, weekends or holidays, the clinic number will be answered by 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**.