

## **CHILDREN'S EAR, NOSE & THROAT ASSOCIATES INSTRUCTIONS AFTER PE TUBE INSERTION**

Pressure equalization (PE) tubes are usually placed for chronic ear infections or fluid in the ear. A myringotomy, or incision, is made in the eardrum and a small plastic or silicone tube is inserted through this opening in order to allow air into the middle ear. The tube usually remains in place for 9 to 12 months after which it usually falls into the ear canal. The tube can then be removed from the ear in the office. Complications such as perforated eardrum or scarring resulting in hearing loss are very rare.

### **DAY OF THE PROCEDURE (after surgery):**

1. Liquid or light foods may be taken after your child has fully awakened from the anesthetic. Your child may have a regular diet later that day. Your child may continue to take any other daily medications.
2. Pain in the ear may be present and is readily relieved by Tylenol.
3. Cotton may have been inserted in the ear canal at the time of surgery to absorb drainage. Ear drainage may be blood-tinged and usually last 3 to 5 days. Cotton can be used as needed in the ear opening. Call the office if there is drainage beyond 5 to 7 days.
4. Drops of an antibiotic solution are usually used at the time of surgery, and are usually sent home with the patient. These drops may be labeled as ear or eye drops but are to be used only in the ears. Use the antibiotic drops as directed by the discharge nurse, usually 3 to 7 days. Keep the remaining drops for possible future use with ear drainage.

### **DAY AFTER THE PROCEDURE:**

1. Activity should return to normal. This includes returning to school.
2. A follow-up appointment should be made around 2 to 4 weeks after surgery.
3. Flying is permitted at this time.

### **GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. **Infants and toddlers** may bathe or swim without requiring earplugs, as long as caution is taken to avoid submerging the head in water. Earplugs are used in some infants or toddlers who complain of irritation of the ear with water exposure.
2. **Older children** may benefit from an earplug while swimming. Swimming is allowed as long as the head is not deeper than 2-3 feet. Deeper underwater swimming is not encouraged unless earplugs are used. Earplugs are recommended in children who complain of irritation of the ear with water exposure. Jumping and diving into the water is to be avoided at all times.
3. **Ear drainage** may occur immediately after the procedure or at any time while the tubes are in the ear. Ear drainage is a sign of an ear infection and can usually be treated only with eardrops and not oral antibiotics. Ear drainage is usually mucous, white, yellow, green, bloody or foul smelling. Please call during office hours for instructions. You may start your eardrops and clean the outside of the ear with a cotton swab moistened with hydrogen peroxide or a vinegar-water solution.
4. The tubes may be visible in the ear canal. They cannot be reached with a child's probing finger, but can be reached with a Q-tip. **DO NOT INSERT ANY OBJECTS INTO THE EAR CANAL** except earplugs as recommended.

### **WHEN SHOULD I CALL THE OFFICE?**

- A. Fever over 102.5 within 24 hours of surgery.
- B. Bloody or purulent drainage that worsens instead of lessens immediately after surgery.
- C. Ear drainage which is bloody, yellow, green or foul smelling.
- D. Ear drainage which does not clear after using antibiotic eardrops for 7 days.