

Grommets or Ear Tube Surgery

For all enquiries:

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ENT North

General Information

- After an anaesthetic, it is common to feel groggy for up to 24 hours. Children are often quite disorientated for the first hour or so. Nausea +/- vomiting can also occur. Medication can be given if this is difficult to tolerate.
- You may not be allowed to drive yourself home after the anaesthetic, or to go home alone. Please arrange for someone to collect you from the hospital and take you home if advised that this is necessary.
- If there is fluid in the ear at the time of the operation, you might notice some 'drippiness' in the first few days. This is commonly mixed with a little bit of blood in the first day.
- We don't expect any pain, unless the surgery has been combined with another operation.
- There are no restrictions in what you can and can't eat after this operation.

Pain Relief/Antibiotics

Your surgeon will provide a script for pain relief, or instructions on what to buy from the chemist. Unless another procedure has been done, we don't expect anything beyond mild pain in the first day or so, and commonly no pain at all. Typical types of pain relief include:

- Paracetamol (Panadol, Chemist's Own etc): use this as needed, as your 'first line' pain relief. Make sure you use the dose appropriate for your/your child's weight, rather than purely based on age.
- Anti-inflammatory medication (e.g. Nurofen): these are quite safe to take after grommet surgery. Talk to your doctor or nurse if other operations have been done at the same time.
- If your surgeon prescribes antibiotics for you, take them as directed.
- You will often be given eardrops to take if there is fluid or active infection present at the time of your operation.

Activities

- Take the remainder of the day off once you get home from your operation. Sometimes the 'hangover' of the anaesthetic can last through the next day, so anticipate having this off. Many people feel well enough to get back to regular activities the next day.
- Avoid strenuous exercise (team sports, jogging, heavy weights etc) for two weeks after the operation, and be sensible when you recommence these.
- Children generally are quite sensible about increasing their activity as they recover from their operation, so be guided by their behaviour in terms of what they can do.
- Be careful with driving if you still feel groggy from the anaesthetic the next day.

Water precautions

- Having a grommet in the ear increases the risk of infection if water gets into the ear canal. Therefore, as long as the grommets are in place, you will need to keep water out of the ear canals. Avoid head immersion altogether for the first week. After that, earplugs need to be used anytime the head goes/might go completely underwater (e.g. swimming, in the bath). Most people do not need to use precautions when in the shower, providing you keep your head upright when in the shower stream.
- Cotton wool covered with Vaseline and sitting in the 'bowl' of the ear is usually fine for adult showers or baths. 'Blutac' makes a great, cheap source of custom-made earplugs for most children, and can be helped to stay in place with a headband or swimming cap. Make sure the piece is large enough so it doesn't fall into the canal completely.
- Commercial fitted earplugs are also available from our rooms for those that need or prefer them.

When to Seek Medical Advice

- A fever of >38degrees.
- Worsening discharge from the ears, or new onset of discharge if there was initially none occurring.
- Excessive sedation from pain relief tablets.
- Severe pain, nausea with vomiting, or severe dizziness, especially if it persists for more than a day.

Please call your surgeon for advice if any of the above occur, or if you have any other concerns.

Drs Amott and Yuen advise both adult and paediatric patients to present to Austin Health if further assessment is needed. They can care for you there, and have access to continuous back up from other ENT surgeons, the Emergency Department and Theatre, if those services are needed.

Follow-Up

- Your ENT Surgeon will make an appointment to see you about one month after your operation. Please book a hearing test to be done a few days beforehand (your surgeon can provide a request form).
- If you have your hearing test done in the community, please bring a copy of this with you to your appointment.

If there is any prolonged discharge from your/your child's ears while the grommets are in place, please contact us for an appointment, as we can often clean the ears and stop the discharge quickly with the equipment we have in the rooms.