

**Jesse G. Wardlow, MD FACS**

**Eileen M. Mahoney, MD**

**Keith M. Lertsburapa, MD**



5207 Main St. Suite 5 Downers Grove • 12 Salt Creek Ln. Suite 106 Hinsdale • 15728 S. Rte 59 Plainfield

Phone: 630-981-0032

Fax: 630-241-0884

## **TYMPANOSTOMY WITH TUBE PLACEMENT** **POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

With “Tympanostomy with Tube Placement,” a tiny tube (pressure equalization tube) is inserted into the eardrum. This lets air into the ear and also allows the ear to drain. The artificial tube thus bypasses the Eustachian tube and will usually last 6-12 months. Occasionally, the tubes can persist for longer, or may fall out more quickly. With these tubes in place, there will be fewer ear infections and usually better hearing. However, the pressure equalization tube does not protect the ear. Without protection, water can enter the middle ear and you can get an ear infection. Ear plugs are needed whenever you swim, wash your hair, or get the head wet. Rarely, the tubes can leave a hole behind in the ear drum.

### **Drainage**

The ear(s) may drain for 2-3 days after surgery. This drainage may be any color such as clear, yellow, clear pink, or may even be bloody. If the drainage is bloody, and persists beyond the first day, please call the doctor for instructions. If ear drops are prescribed, please use as directed depending on the physician’s instructions.

### **Pain**

Most patients do not have pain after this procedure. If needed, Tylenol given every 4 hours according to the package directions should give relief and keep you comfortable.

### **Fever**

Some patients have a low-grade fever after this procedure. Give Tylenol according to the package directions which should reduce the fever. Call the doctor if the temperature is higher than 101° F or 38.4° C.

### **Activity**

Normal activity is expected by the late afternoon or next morning. Swimming, however, is prohibited until the child is seen by a doctor and fitted for earplugs or another secure device is obtained (Band It, etc.) because it is important that water does not get into the child’s ears. A single episode of water contamination, however, is not serious and should cause no problem. Please be aware of any drainage that may subsequently improve. Scuba diving is also not allowed while the tubes are in place.

## **Diet**

You may continue with a normal diet as tolerated. Children may be nauseated after general anesthesia. However, if nausea and vomiting are persistent, stay on clear liquids and contact the doctor.

## **Ear Protection**

With the tympanostomy, a hole is made in the eardrum and this hole is kept open with an artificial tube. Water can enter the middle ear through this hole and it must be protected from water. There are three ways to protect the ear(s):

1. Take a small piece of cotton and coat it with Vaseline. Insert it into the ear(s). This may be used when showering, bathing, or washing the hair.
2. Mack's Pillows Soft Ear Plugs are sold over-the-counter at many drug stores. These are very effective and inexpensive. Break each plug into 3-4 pieces. Roll each piece of the silicone into the size of a long jelly bean (long, thin, and oval rather than round). Gently pull the outer ear back and up. This straightens the ear canal for insertion. Gently insert the plug just to cover the ear canal opening, not deep into the ear canal. The piece of silicone should be wide enough to block the ear canal. This will prevent water from entering the ear canal and the middle ear. Remove plugs after use. They may be saved and re-used. These earplugs may be used when bathing, showering, washing hair, surface swimming, and shallow diving (no scuba diving).
3. Custom-molded earplugs - sometimes the cotton and soft earplugs are not enough, especially if one is an avid swimmer. If necessary, our Audiologist can make custom-mold earplugs especially for you. If interested, please inquire about these at the time of your pre-operative visit.

## **Ear Infections**

Patients with tubes can still get ear infections. However, the tubes will decrease the number of infections and the ear infections will also be less severe. Some patients will have no infections while the tubes are in place. For patients with tubes, the usual sign of ear infections is drainage. It is possible that you will not have a fever or pain. If you have ear drainage, please call your family doctor or call us at 630-981-0032. This needs to be treated.

## **Follow-up Visits**

You need to be seen in our office 1-2 weeks after the procedure. Please call the office to set up a follow-up appointment. At that office visit, your ears will be examined. An audiogram may be repeated at that time. Regular ear check-ups are very important. Over time, the tubes may be pushed out into the ear canal. This is normal. You may not know when the tube falls out. This will be detected by your doctor. If significant ear infections re-occur, the tube may need to be replaced.

## **CALL THE DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:**

1. Eardrops were not ordered and ear drainage lasts more than 3 days after the procedure
2. Ear drainage begins anytime after the third day after the procedure
3. Fever not controlled by Tylenol or Motrin
4. Child has difficulty breathing, excessive bleeding, persistent vomiting, or severe pain

\*To speak with our office, please call (630) 981-0032 between 8am-4pm (Mon-Fri)

\*For prescription refills please call during office hours with your pharmacy number available

\*For after hours Emergencies, a doctor on call may be reached at (630) 981-0032, or go to your nearest Emergency Room