

Postoperative Instructions

Ear Tubes

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Ear & Hearing @ Center for Neurosciences

This instruction sheet is designed to help you care for your ear(s) following surgery, and to answer many of the commonly asked questions. *Please read the entire sheet carefully.*

Leaving the Hospital

- You may receive a prescription for ear drops. If instructed to do so, please use them for 5-7 days. Otherwise, keep the script with you for future use. Oral antibiotics are rarely used after tube placement; if required, you will receive this prescription on the day of surgery.
- It is recommended that a weight appropriate dose of Tylenol or Ibuprofen be given every 4-6 hours for the first 24 hours.

Home Care-The First Few Days

- You may return to work or school the day after surgery.
- It is normal for the ear(s) to drain for several days. This drainage can be yellow, clear, or even blood-tinged. A cotton ball can be placed in the ear(s) to absorb the drainage.
- If the drainage becomes thick, yellow, green, or has a foul-smelling odor, please begin using antibiotic ear drops and call Dr. Jacob's office. If he is unable to see you in a timely manner, you may be asked to go to your primary care physician's office for first-line care.
- If there is no drainage, leave the ear(s) open to air.
- Do not clean the ear canals with cotton swabs.
- The auricle (outer ear) can be gently wiped with a soft cloth to remove drainage.
- You may wash hair but please keep all water out of the ear canals by using a cotton ball soaked with antibiotic ointment or Vaseline placed at the opening to the canals. This effectively keeps water out during showers, baths, etc.
- Hearing snapping, crackling, and popping in the ears is normal.
- Hearing usually improves right away after surgery but it may sometimes take a few weeks.
- It is not uncommon to feel slightly dizzy or lightheaded for up to a week after surgery.
- You may fly immediately after surgery. No precautions required.

Home Care-After the First Few Days

- Drainage should begin to decrease and pain should also subside.
- When bathing, keep water out of the ear(s) using a cotton ball soaked with antibiotic ointment or Vaseline. Custom ear plugs are also an option.
- You may swim (in chlorinated water only) beginning 10 days after surgery. Avoid diving and deep water swimming.
- Ear plugs are recommended if recurrent infections occur following bathing or swimming.

- If drainage develops anytime in the future, please do the following:
 - Begin using antibiotic ear drops for 5-7 days. You may obtain these either through your primary care physician or through Dr. Jacob's office (whichever is faster).
 - Keep ALL water out of the ear(s)

Your First Follow-up Appointment

- Please schedule a follow up visit for approximately one month after surgery.
- A 3-4 month postoperative visit with new audiogram (hearing test) may also be necessary. Ideally, both that visit and the hearing test can be scheduled the same day.

Call Ear & Hearing @ Center for Neurosciences (520-795-7750) if you observe:

- Increased pain not relieved by Tylenol or Ibuprofen.
- Large amounts of bleeding from the ear.
- Pus/Foul smelling drainage from the ear.
- Redness in the ear area.
- Temperature over 101.5° on 2 consecutive readings.

Patient or Caregiver Signature: _____

Date: _____