

BMT Post Operative Instructions

Nurse Line (8:30am to 5pm) **937-496-0261**
After Hours Doctor Line **937-496-2600**

Effects of Anesthesia

Placing ear ventilation tubes (BMT) involves a very brief anesthesia, typically 5 minutes or less. Patients may be quite irritable for 15-45 minutes after surgery, most return to normal activity the same day. Nausea and vomiting is rarely seen, and usually resolves by the evening of surgery - even without additional medications.

Medications:

- Your doctor will give you ear drops to use after surgery: Use them as directed by your surgeon.
- Keep these drops when you are done using them because they are used to treat clogged tubes, ear infections and chronic drainage when ear tubes are in place.
- Most children do not need pain medications after this surgery, however you may use regular Tylenol or Ibuprofen if you are concerned that your child is having pain.

Other effects of surgery:

- Children may tug at their ears, but this is not necessarily indicative of pain.
- You may see a small amount of blood from the ears for the first day or two. This is normal.
- Drainage usually occurs in the first few days after surgery. If it continues after drops are discontinued, call the doctor's office.
- Low-grade fever may occur. Tylenol or Ibuprofen (either oral or suppository) can be used.
- Children can return to normal activity, school or daycare the following day after surgery.
- Hearing is generally improved after tubes are inserted. Because of this, your child may be sensitive to or startle with loud sounds until he/she gets used to their improved hearing.

How long do tubes stay in the ears?

Ear tubes remain in the ears for anywhere from 6-24 months. The average is about a year. On infrequent occasions, they stay in the ears for several years and have to be removed with another surgery. The tubes usually spontaneously extrude and in such event it will be found lying loose in the ear canal or be completely gone at a follow up visit. The patient will probably not know when the tube comes out and it will do no harm lying in the canal until it is removed.

What should I do if I see bleeding from the ears?

Small amounts of blood soon after surgery are normal. If bleeding is seen from the ears several months later, the child may either be having an infection, an inflammatory reaction against the tubes, or the tube is beginning to migrate out. If this happens, call the doctor's office for further instructions.

Can my child swim with tubes?

Children can swim in chlorinated pools after a BMT without earplugs. They should avoid diving into the water. You should always use earplugs when swimming in lakes or in the ocean.

Bathing

No ear plugs are needed when bathing but have your child do bathtime "playing" in non-soapy water and then use soap/shampoo just prior to getting out of the tub.

General information

- Children can still have ear infections even with tubes. Tubes will let fluid drain out of the ear, allow for less (or no) pain, and also allow the use of topical antibiotics instead of oral antibiotics.
- Drainage from the ears is common when ear tubes are in place. It can be normal or an indication of infection. If you see drainage from the ears for more than 1-2 days, call the office for instructions.
- Some children will need another set of tubes after their first set come out. Should this occur, children often have an adenoidectomy done with the second set of tubes as this improves drainage of the middle ear.
- Children will be seen a few weeks after surgery for a hearing test to confirm tube placement and patency. Children with ear tubes in place should be seen by the doctor every 6 months after surgery to have their ear tubes evaluated.
- Rarely when the tubes fall out, the eardrum does not heal, leaving a hole in the eardrum. This is called a tympanic membrane perforation and can be repaired with surgery.