

# After Your Surgery: Ear Tubes



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## What to Expect

- Ears may be sore for the first few days. Children may pull at their ears.
- Mild ear drainage may occur for the first few days, sometimes longer.
- If surgery was done under general anesthesia, nausea and stomach discomfort may occur for the first couple days. Start with a clear liquid diet and advance to regular diet as tolerated.

## What to Do

- Take Tylenol per instructions on bottle if needed for pain.
- Ok to resume normal activity on the evening after surgery.
- Use the prescribed ear drops, 4 drops to each ear twice a day for 7 days after surgery.
- Restart the ear drops if ear drainage occurs.

## What Not to Do

- Ear plugs are not required when in clean water (i.e., bathing, showering, swimming in clean pools). However, ear plugs should be worn if swimming in potentially dirty water such as lakes, rivers, and oceans. It is ok to use ear plugs as needed if water causes discomfort.
- It is ok to use a cloth to wipe the outside of the ear, but do not use Q-tips to clean ears.

## When to Call or See the Doctor

- Persistent or foul-smelling ear drainage.
- Significant bleeding from the ears (mild blood-tinged drainage is normal).
- Persistent fever over 101° F.

## Follow Up

- Follow up 2 weeks after surgery. Will have repeat hearing test at that visit.
- Can usually return to daycare/school/work and resume normal activity the day after surgery.
- Tubes typically stay in place between 6 and 18 months, but may fall out earlier or later.
- Follow up will be continued every 4 - 6 months until tubes have fallen out and ear problems have resolved.