

LEARNING ABOUT MYRINGOTOMY (EAR TUBE SURGERY)

Ear Tube Surgery is the Most Common Surgery with Anesthesia Performed on Children

Ear Tubes are Used to Equalize Pressure in Ear Drums and Minimize Future Infections

Middle ear infections (otitis media) are common in children and when they occur frequently, fluid can build up in the ear and may lead to hearing problems or speech delays. Ear tubes allow for drainage of the excess fluid and for ventilation of the middle ear space. What are the benefits of ear tubes? How is the procedure done? And what happens after surgery? Please read the following summary to learn more about ear tubes.

01 | When Ear Tubes Are Recommended

Each year, more than half a million children require ear tube surgery. When a person experiences repeated ear infections, hearing loss caused by these infections, or in some cases, the malformation of the ear drum or Eustachian tube, ear tube surgery may be recommended.

The benefits resulting from surgery include:

- Reduction of risk of future ear infection(s)
- Restoration of hearing loss caused by fluid buildup
- Improved speech and balance
- Improved behavior and sleep
- Improved performance at school

02 | What to Expect During Surgery

There are three types of ear tubes, tympanostomy tubes, ventilation tubes and pressure equalization tubes, and they are tiny, hollow cylinders made of plastic or metal. When ear tube surgery is indicated, the tubes are inserted during an outpatient procedure called a myringotomy. A small opening is made in the ear drum or tympanic membrane, fluid is suctioned out, and the tube is placed in the opening. The procedure typically lasts less than 15 minutes and patients recover quickly.

03 | After Surgery

Immediately following surgery, the patient will be monitored for one to two hours and then sent home with post-operative care instructions and antibiotic ear drops. Patients usually experience mild nausea and drowsiness, but pain is not common. Hearing loss will be immediately resolved. It is normal to expect fluid drainage for several days to weeks after surgery.

Tympanostomy tubes usually remain in the ear(s) for six to eighteen months. Six month checkups are important to check the health of the ear and the placement of the tubes. As the eardrum heals, the tubes eventually fall out.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/ear-tubes/home/ovc-20199999>

Did You Know?

The average age for ear tube insertion is 1-3 years old.

References

<http://www.entnet.org/content/ear-tubes>

http://www.medicinenet.com/anatomy_of_an_ear_infection_pictures_slideshow/article.htm

http://www.emedicinehealth.com/ear_tubes/article_em.htm