

SPRINGFIELD ENT & FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY

3555 South Culpepper Circle
Springfield, Missouri 65804
(417) 887- 3855 / www.springfieldent.com

INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION FOR PLACEMENT OF PRESSURE EQUALIZING TUBES (PE TUBES)

Dear Patients: we wish your surgical experience to be as positive and free of stress as possible. Please contact our office if you have any concerns - remember, there are no silly questions!

Common reasons for placing pressure equalizing tubes PE Tubes in the ears include:

- Frequent middle ear infections (typically more than 3 in 6 months or 4 in one year).
- Persistent fluid behind ear drums (in middle ear) with hearing loss for 3 months.
- Eustachian tube dysfunction in which the eustachian tubes do not properly allow air to get into middle ears. This causes negative pressure behind the ear drum. This may result in ear pain or damage the ear drum or structures inside the ear.
- Ear infections with other complicating factors such as mastoiditis.

Alternatives to surgery include the following:

- No treatment - simply watching ear(s) to see if they improve or become worse.
- Medications such as antibiotics, allergy medications, or others.
- Placement of a temporary hole or incision in eardrum (myringotomy).

Scheduling PET placement:

- Adults will normally have tube(s) placed in the office so that the preoperative and hospital visits described below will not be necessary.
- Surgery will have been discussed and recommended during a regular office visit. Frequently, our pre – surgical paperwork shall be done at that visit.
- Audiogram - a hearing test will be performed before and after your tubes are placed.
- Outpatient Surgery visit (only for tubes being done at the hospital / surgery center)
 - If surgery done at any Cox facility, these visits are all done at the outpatient center at Cox South.
 - Process paperwork, have any lab tests done prior to surgery date.
 - Typically requires several hours.
 - The anesthesiologist shall discuss anesthesia plans.

What to expect during surgery:

- PE tubes for children are usually inserted in the operating room under general anesthesia. For adults, this is usually performed in our office under topical anesthesia on the ear drum.
- Surgery lasts about 10 minutes (including time required for anesthesia).
- The ear(s) are examined with a microscope. An incision is made in the eardrum, and the PE tube is placed into the eardrum. Antibiotic drops and a cotton ball are usually placed in the ears.
- Patients generally go home shortly after surgery.
- Tubes can be placed even if a patient has an ear infection. A respiratory infection or other illness may require delaying surgery for reasons of anesthesia safety. If in doubt, call our office.

Risks of surgery:

Tube placement is a quite safe, minor procedure. However, it is important to recognize that *any* surgery may result in infection, bleeding, reaction to anesthesia, or even death. Although unlikely, possible risks include:

- Injury to the ear, hearing, and balance structures (hearing loss, dizziness)
- Injury to nerves inside the middle ear such as the facial nerve (for the muscle of the face for facial motion) and chorda tympani nerve (a taste nerve)
- Injury to blood vessels or other structures in the area of the ear.
- Reactions to anesthesia and other medications.
- Perforation (hole) in eardrum.
- Scarring of eardrum, inflammatory growth on ear drum, tube falling into middle ear.

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- Possible need for other treatment such as antibiotics or placing another set of tubes in the future.

What to expect after surgery:

- Pain - usually mild and may be treated with Tylenol® (acetaminophen), Motrin® (ibuprofen), or similar medication
- Bleeding - uncommon and would be a very small amount
- Drainage - Mild drainage may occur right after tubes are placed. Persistent or pus - like drainage suggests infection and may require treatment.
- Diet - Normal diet - no restrictions after surgery

Activity

- As tolerated – normally no restrictions except as below.
- Keep ears dry for two weeks after surgery – using 1/3 of a cotton ball with Vaseline on it in the ear works well.
- After two weeks, head dunking in a chlorinated pool or bathtub is usually OK and earplugs are not normally needed.

Care, follow-up, and other information:

- Patients are usually seen back in our office about 2 weeks after surgery. A hearing test is done at this visit.
- Tubes usually stay in the eardrums about an average of 1 year. Some last longer and others less time. They usually fall out on their own. Some tubes (often called "T - tubes") are designed to stay longer or permanently.
- It may be necessary to remove a tube if it remains in place beyond several years (assuming that the patient has not had ear infections)
- An ear infection is much less likely but still possible after tube placement, and you will notice pus - like drainage from the ear if an infection occurs. You can see your regular physician for this.
- Bleeding might occur from the ear during the time the tubes are in place. This is rarely serious and generally indicates infection, inflammation, or that the tube is falling out.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in your health care! Please let us know how we may make your surgical experience more pleasant.

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