

# Care Instructions After Tympanoplasty or Mastoidectomy

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## What is a tympanoplasty or mastoidectomy?

- A **tympanoplasty** is a surgery on the eardrum or the middle ear. It can help restore or improve hearing in people with conductive hearing loss. We may also use this procedure to repair a hole in the eardrum.
- A **mastoidectomy** is surgical removal of the mastoid bone, which sits behind the ear. We may use this procedure to remove disease from the mastoid bone or to get access to the middle ear.

## How can I care for my child after the surgery?

- 24 hours after surgery, remove the cloth-like dressing or plastic cup covering the ear and the gauze underneath. There may be a cotton ball soaked with blood just outside the ear canal. You can remove this with clean tweezers or clean hands.
  - Use a damp washcloth or gauze to gently clean the outside of the ear. Then lightly tape a clean, dry cotton ball over the ear canal until the drainage (draining fluid from the ear) has stopped. Repeat as needed.
  - Bloody drainage may come and go for about a week after surgery.
- Your child may have a 1-1.5 inch (3-4 centimeter) **incision** (cut) behind the ear. Keep this area dry for 48 hours.
  - After 48 hours, it's okay if the incision site gets wet. If it does, pat the area dry with a clean towel.
- Keep the inside of the ear dry until your doctor says it's okay (usually at the second follow-up appointment) to decrease the risk for infection.

- Lightly tape a cotton ball dipped in Vaseline® to the outside of the ear canal when bathing, showering, or washing your child's hair.
- 7-10 days after the procedure, wet the area behind the ear to help remove the Steri-Strips™.
- We will remove more packing from deep in the ear canal at the first follow-up appointment (around 1-2 weeks after surgery).

### **What medications will my child need?**

- Antibiotic eye drops (to be used in the ear)
  - These drops help to prevent infection and dissolve the packing in the ear.
  - We will give you instructions for using the drops. Use these ear drops when replacing the cotton ball over their ear.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Motrin®)
  - These are used for pain control. You can give them to your child as needed or on a set schedule. If they need **around-the-clock dosing** (giving your child medication on a set time schedule so their pain is managed all day and all night), give them acetaminophen and ibuprofen together every 6 hours.

### **What activities can my child do after surgery?**

Follow these guidelines until your child's first follow-up appointment after surgery:

- Your child may go back to school after 2-3 days if they are feeling well and they don't need around-the-clock pain medication.
- Avoid any activities that would cause a build-up of pressure in the ear.
  - Tell them not to blow their nose.
  - Have your child sneeze with their mouth open.

- Have them avoid heavy lifting (anything heavier than 10-15 pounds), bending, or strenuous activity (any activity that raises their heart rate and blood pressure).
- Have them avoid any situation that may cause an injury to their head.
- Talk with your child's pediatrician if constipation (having few or difficult bowel movements) is or becomes an issue.
- Your child should avoid swimming for 2 months after their surgery.

### **When should I call the clinic?**

Call the clinic if your child has any of these concerns:

- Heavy bleeding from the ear
- Incision site concerns:
  - Redness, swelling, or any drainage or leaking fluid
- Fever higher than 101.5° F that lasts longer than 24 hours and can't be managed with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin®)
- Increasing tenderness or pain
- Dizziness

### **What is the contact information for questions or concerns?**

- Please contact the clinic nurse by calling (734) 936-5730.
- On weekends or after 5:00 PM, call (734) 936-6267 and ask for the resident Otolaryngology doctor on call.

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