



Patient & Family Guide

2023

Myringotomy Tubes

Valley Regional Hospital



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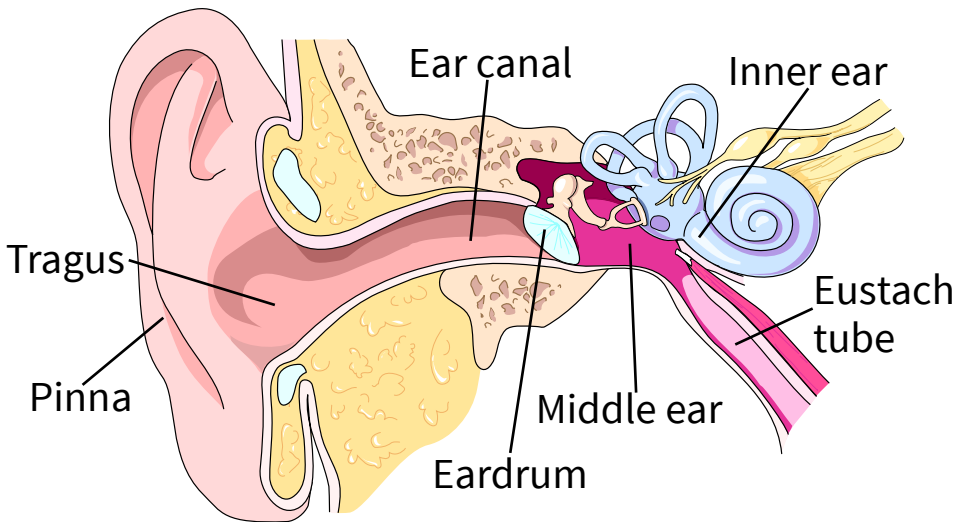
Myringotomy Tubes

What is a myringotomy tube?

A myringotomy tube is a small plastic tube that is put in the eardrum to:

- › let fluid or infection drain out of the middle ear (where ear infections happen).
- › let air into the ear.

The tubes are about 2 mm by 3 mm.



What should I expect after surgery?

- After surgery, your child will go to the Recovery Room.
- A member of the health care team will bring you to the Recovery Room soon after your child wakes up.
- You will go with them back to the Mat/Child Unit and stay with them until they are ready to go home (about 1 to 2 hours).
- After surgery, your child's ear may drain (leak fluid) and they may need eardrops.

Pain

- There is usually not much pain after the tube is put in. If your child is in pain, you may give them acetaminophen (Tylenol®).
- Ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®) also works well.
- Acetaminophen and ibuprofen can be given at the same time.

Activity and eating

- It is OK for your child to do their usual activities 12 to 24 hours after surgery.
- They may have some nausea (feeling sick to their stomach) from the anesthetic and may not feel like eating solid foods right away.

How long do the tubes stay in?

- As the eardrum grows, it pushes the tube out into the ear canal. The tube stays in the ear canal for a few days or weeks, until it falls out on its own.
- Temporary tubes stay in for about a year and a half, but permanent tubes do not fall out on their own.
- You and your child may not notice when the tube falls out.

What are the possible side effects?

- In some children, it is common for fluid behind the eardrum to continue to leak.
- Sometimes the hole in the eardrum will not heal after the tubes fall out. If this happens, there will be a small hole in your child's eardrum.
- If the hole does not heal on its own, it can be fixed with surgery. This surgery is usually done when the child is older and is no longer having ear infections.

Ear infections

Using Ciprodex® ear drops

- Place 4 drops in the draining ear, 2 times a day. Do this until the draining stops.
- Gently tap or pump the tragus (see image on page 1) to help the drops go down.
- Pour the rest of the fluid out by tilting your child's head to the side.
- Your child may still have ear infections when the tubes are in place. Your child will **not** have a fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F) or pain from the infection.
- You may see green or yellow fluid draining from their ear. There may be blood in the fluid. The tube is letting the infection drain.
- When the drainage has stopped, stop using the drops.
- Only use Ciprodex® if there is no drainage, unless you were told to do so at the ENT Clinic.
- Your child should **not** need oral (taken by mouth) antibiotics for ear infections while the tubes are in their ears.

Swimming and water in the ears

- Getting water in their ears is not usually a problem for most children with myringotomy tubes.
- Water may pass through the tubes and cause pain or infection if:
 - › your child's head is deeper than 2 feet under water.
 - › there is a lot of soap or oil in the water (like in a bath).
- Older children who dive into water or swim underwater a lot get water in their ears more often. It can help to wear earplugs or a swimming cap.
- Children of any age should also wear earplugs or a swimming cap if they have ear pain when they get water in their ears.
- If water gets in your child's ears, you can use a hair dryer on the ear to prevent infection.

Flying on a plane

- The tubes will not cause pain or make your child's ears pop on a plane. They will help stop your child's ears from popping.

What will happen after the tubes fall out?

- Your child may have an ear infection soon after the tubes fall out. Look for these signs of infection:
 - › Hearing loss
 - › Pain
 - › Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
- If this happens, your child will need oral antibiotics. Eardrops will **not** help once the eardrum has already healed.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.

