PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Instructions After Your Myringotomy With Tube Placement

This information will help you care for yourself after your myringotomy (meer-ing-GAH-toh-mee) with tube placement. It will also help you know what to expect during your recovery. A myringotomy is sometimes called an ear tube surgery.

What is a myringotomy with tube placement procedure?

A myringotomy is a procedure where your doctor makes a small incision (surgical cut) in your eardrum. They will place a small tube into your eardrum to drain out any fluid that has built up. This will relieve pressure from your ear and restore any hearing you may have lost due to the fluid.

Your procedure may be done with either a local anesthetic or general anesthesia. A local anesthetic is medication that numbs an area of your body. General

anesthesia is medication that makes you sleep during your procedure.

Recovery after your myringotomy with tube placement procedure

- You may have some discomfort in your affected ear for 1 to 2 days after your procedure. Your affected ear is the ear that had the myringotomy. If you have discomfort, talk with your doctor about what medication you can take to help.
- It may take a few days for your hearing to get better. Adults who have this procedure may have muffled hearing afterward. Muffled hearing can make your affected ear feel like it’s clogged or plugged up. Because of this, it may be hard to hear clearly. Muffled hearing usually goes away after a few days.
- You may have some dizziness for a short time. If you feel dizzy for more than 12 hours, call your doctor.
- You may notice a small amount of clear or yellow fluid draining from your affected ear. This is normal and may last for a few months.
    - If you use a hearing aid, your doctor will tell you when you can start wearing it again. Most people can wear it again once the fluid stops draining from their affected ear.

- Do not shake your head forcefully for 1 month.
- Do not use ear drops in your affected ear while your tube is in place.
- You can sleep on the side of your affected ear.
- You can shower, but do not get water in your affected ear while your tube is in place.
    - Before you shower, put a thin layer of petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) on a cotton ball. Then, put the cotton ball in your affected ear. If you want, you can use a waterproof earplug instead.
- You must wear a waterproof earplug in your affected ear while swimming. Wearing a waterproof earplug will help prevent water from getting into your ear canal. If any water gets into your ear canal, you may get an infection. Your doctor will tell you when you can start swimming without wearing a waterproof earplug.
- You can travel and fly on an airplane. We recommend you wait 1 to 2 days after your procedure, as you may feel more comfortable traveling then.
- In time, your tube will fall out of your affected ear on its own. This usually happens about 6 months after your procedure.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have any of these:

- A fever of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher.
- Dizziness that does not get better 12 hours after your procedure.
- Pain or discomfort in your affected ear, even after taking medication to help.
- A loss of hearing in your affected ear.
- Green or yellow pus-like drainage from your affected ear.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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