Instructions After Your Myringotomy With Tube Placement

This information will help you care for yourself after your myringotomy with tube placement.

About Your Myringotomy With Tube Placement Procedure

A myringotomy is a procedure in which your doctor makes a tiny cut in your eardrum. This drains fluid from behind your eardrum. 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 local anesthesia (medication that numbs an area of your body) or in the operating room under general anesthesia (medication that makes you sleep during your procedure).

During your procedure, your doctor will make a small incision (surgical cut) on your eardrum. They will place a small tube into your eardrum to drain out any fluid that has built up.

After Your Procedure
• You may have some discomfort 1 to 2 days after your procedure. To relieve any discomfort, take 1 to 2 tablets of acetaminophen (Tylenol®) every 4 to 6 hours. If the acetaminophen doesn’t help, call your doctor.

• It may take a few days for your hearing to improve.

• You may have some temporary dizziness. 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 ear. This is normal and may last for a few months.

• Don’t shake your head forcefully for 1 month.

• You can shower after your procedure but don’t get water in your affected ear (the ear that had the myringotomy) while your tube is in place.
  ◦ Before you shower, apply a thin layer of petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) to a cotton ball and place it in your affected ear(s). You can also use a waterproof earplug instead.

• You must wear a waterproof earplug in your affected ear(s) while swimming to prevent any water from getting into your ear canal. If any water enters your ear canal, you may get an infection. Your doctor will let you know when you can begin swimming without wearing a waterproof earplug.

• Your tube will eventually fall out of your affected ear(s). This usually happens 6 months after your procedure.

Call Your Doctor or Nurse if You Have:
• Dizziness that doesn’t get better 12 hours after your procedure.

• A temperature of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher.

• Increased pain or discomfort in your affected ear(s) that doesn’t get better after taking medication.

• A loss of hearing in your affected ear(s).

• Green or yellow drainage coming from your affected ear(s).

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

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