

Care of the Child after Ear Surgery (Tympanomastoidectomy)

Thank you for choosing Wake Forest Baptist Health-Brenner Children's Hospital. Please let us know if you have questions or concerns or do not understand the information we give you. Always ask us to explain words or phrases that are not familiar.

Once the surgery is over, we need to think about helping your child heal. Right after surgery, your child will go to the recovery room and then to a pediatric unit. Most children will spend the night in the hospital and go home the next morning.

The nurses will give your child medicine for pain and nausea, if needed.

Most children will get a regular diet shortly after surgery. On the day after surgery, we will remove the dressing (bandage) and look at the wound.

Care of the Wound behind the Ear

We will close the wound behind the ear with stitches that don't need to be removed. At home use hydrogen peroxide at least twice each day to loosen the crust on the wound. Then put a light layer of antibiotic ointment (any type is fine) on the wound. Keep this wound absolutely dry for two days after the surgery.

Care of the Ear Canal

There are incisions (cuts) deep inside the ear that you cannot see. There is a special bandage we call a "packing" and ointment in the ear. The packing will dissolve. It is normal to see some bloody drainage from the ear for about 2 to 3 days after surgery. Just keep a cotton ball in the ear to catch the drainage. You can change the cotton ball as often as needed.

You must keep all water out of the ear.

Getting water in ear after surgery could cause a bad infection and limit your child's chances of a good result from surgery. Think about how to keep water out of the ear when you wash your child's hair. You might put a rag over the ear or put something like Vaseline® on a cotton ball and gently put the cotton ball in the ear to prevent water getting in the ear. Do not let your child use an ear plug for at least three weeks after surgery. Your doctor will let you know when it is okay to get water in the ear and when it is okay to use an ear plug.

Activity Restriction after Surgery

Your child must NOT blow his or her nose for two weeks after surgery or the ear drum may not heal. If your child needs to sneeze or cough, your child must keep the mouth open. Tell your child not to hold back the cough or sneeze which would create pressure in the ear.

Your child should not compete in sports nor do gym class for two to six weeks after surgery. Ask your doctor for more details. Your surgeon will let you know when it is okay for your child to do normal routines.

Medicines after Surgery

We expect your child to have some mild pain after surgery which only lasts a few days. Your doctor will prescribe a medicine for pain. Over-the-counter (OTC) pain medicines such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen also will work. Some children will have brief twinges of pain that may last for weeks after surgery. But this will improve over time.

Your doctor will also prescribe antibiotic pills to decrease the chance of an infection. You must fill this prescription immediately and give as directed.

Doctor's Appointments after Surgery

You must keep all your child's appointments in the months after surgery. Your surgeon will take a small piece of packing out of the ear on the first visit. After this, you will put ear drops in the ear to loosen the rest of the packing and ointment that is deep in the ear. On the second visit, the surgeon will look at the ear drum and probably do a hearing test.

Sometimes, a child may need more surgery on the ear. Your surgeon will let you know if this is needed.

Conclusion

Now that surgery is over, we need to focus on giving the child the support to work through the healing phase. The best things you can do for your child is to:

1. Clean the wound behind the ear.
2. Keep the inside of the ear dry.
3. Give the antibiotic and pain pills.

We are here to help as best as we can. If you have questions and concerns about anything, please call us and we will be happy to give you advice and help any way we can.

We may give you a time and date for your follow-up appointment when we tell you the date your child's surgery is scheduled. Should you lose the appointment, need to change the date or time, or did not get a follow-up appointment, please call your child's doctor's office.

Dr: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Otolaryngology Clinic: (336)716-4161. Between 5:00pm and 8:00am, on weekends and holidays, call 1-800-277-7654 and ask for the doctor on-call for Otolaryngology.

This information is general. If your doctor tells you something different, follow his or her advice and instructions.

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