

BMTT - Post Operative Instructions

Surgery

Placing ear ventilation tubes (BMTT) involves a brief anesthesia, typically 5 minutes or less. Patients may be irritable for 15-45 minutes after surgery. Most patients return to normal activity the same day. You may have nausea or vomiting, but it usually goes away by the evening of surgery without additional medication.

Medication

You will be given antibiotic drops to use after surgery. Place 3 drops in each ear three times a day for three days (remember “3-3-3”). Occasionally you may be asked to use the drops for longer periods of time if infection develops.

Keep these drops when you are done using them because they are used to treat clogged tubes, ear infections, and chronic drainage when ear tubes are in place.

Most children don't need pain medications after this surgery; however, you may use regular Tylenol if you are concerned that your child is having pain.

Effects of Surgery

- Children may tug at their ears, but this does not necessarily mean that he or she is in pain
- You may see a small amount of blood from the ears for the first day or 2. This is normal
- Drainage usually occurs in the first few days after surgery. If it continues after drops are finished, call the doctor's office
- Low-grade fever may occur. Tylenol (either by mouth or rectally) can be used. If your child has a fever greater than 102° F and doesn't respond to Tylenol, call the doctor's office
- Children can return to normal activity, school, or daycare the day after surgery
- Hearing is generally improved after tubes are inserted. Because of this, your child may be sensitive to, or startle with, loud sounds until he or she gets used to their improved hearing

How Long do Tubes Stay in the Ears?

Ear tubes remain in the ears for anywhere from 6-24 months. The average is about one year. On rare occasions, they stay in the ears for several years and have to be removed. The tubes usually come out on their own. The tubes will be found lying loose in the ear canal or be completely gone at a follow-up visit. The patient will probably not know when the tube comes out and it will do no harm lying in the canal until it's removed.

What Should I do if I See Bleeding from the Ears?

Small amounts of blood soon after surgery are normal. If bleeding from the ears continues several months later, the child may either have an infection, an inflammatory reaction against the tubes, or the tube is beginning to come out. If this happens, call the doctor's office for further instructions.

Can my Child Swim with Tubes?

Children can swim in chlorinated pools after a BMTT without earplugs. No diving. You should always use earplugs when swimming in lakes or in the ocean.

Bathing

For 2 weeks after surgery, you should use cotton in the ears covered with a coat of Vaseline when bathing, as soapy water has an easier time of getting into the ear space. After 2 weeks, no ear plugs are

needed when bathing. Have your child do bath time “playing” in non-soapy water, and then use soap/shampoo just before getting out of the tub.

General Information

- Children can still have ear infections, even with tubes. Tubes will let fluid drain out of the ear, allow for less (or no) pain, and also allow the use of topical antibiotics instead of oral antibiotics
- When your child has a cold or virus, you may see fluid similar to “snot” (sometimes mixed with wax) coming from the ears. This not an infection. It is just the ear tubes doing their job to drain fluid
- If your child has significant amounts of foul-smelling creamy white or light yellow drainage, this is an infection. You may begin to use the same antibiotic drops you were given at the time of surgery by placing 5 drops in the draining ear 2 times a day. If the drainage does not stop in 3 days, call the doctor’s office
- Some children will need another set of tubes after their first set comes out. When this happens, children often will have an adenoidectomy done with the second set of tubes, as this improves drainage of the middle ear
- Children will be seen a few weeks after surgery for a hearing test to confirm tube placement and openness. Children with ear tubes in place should be seen by the doctor every 6 months after surgery to have their ear tubes checked