

Bilateral myringotomy with tubes

What is bilateral myringotomy with tympanostomy tube insertion?

Bilateral myringotomy with tympanostomy tube insertion is surgery to place tubes into both of the eardrums. Bilateral means both sides.

- The tubes make a hole in the eardrums.
- The holes allow air to flow in and out of your child's middle ear. This helps stop repeated ear infections and prevent the build-up of fluid.

What happens after surgery?

- Most often, your child will wake up within 30 minutes.
- Some children are very confused and agitated as they wake up. This type of restless, irritable wake up can be upsetting to see but it is very common and happens in children of all ages. It may last for a short time or up to 1 hour or longer.
- Your child may go home when they are calm enough to sit up and drink fluids.

What should I expect after my child goes home?

Your child's doctor will talk with you about what to expect after surgery. Your child's ears may:

- Drain a small amount of blood-tinged fluid during the first week after surgery.
- Feel itchy and "plugged up" for the next 2 weeks.

How should I care for my child at home?

Some guidelines to follow include:

- Keep your child home from day care or school the day of surgery. Have them rest.
- Have your child drink plenty of fluids unless the doctor tells you something different.
 - If your child is a baby, always raise their head while you breast or bottle-feed them.
- Keep water out of your child's ears for at least 2 days. The doctor will give you instructions about bathing and using earplugs if needed.
- Give medicines as advised by your child's doctor.
 - Give acetaminophen (Tylenol or less costly store brand) for pain if prescribed by your child's doctor. Follow the directions on the box carefully, or ask your child's doctor how much medicine to give.
 - Do not give your child more than 5 doses of acetaminophen in 24 hours.
 - Do not give acetaminophen to babies younger than 3 months of age without a doctor's advice.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Bilateral myringotomy with tubes, continued

- If your child is taking an antibiotic, give it as prescribed. **DO NOT** stop giving the medicine because your child feels better unless advised by the doctor.
- Take your child to all follow-up visits.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the doctor **right away** if your child has:

- A low grade fever for more than 3 days.
- Fever of 101°F or higher.
- Bad smelling drainage from the ears for more than 3 days.
- Any bright red bleeding or blood-tinged drainage for more than 3 days.

Also call if you have questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.