

PATIENT INFORMATION

A publication of West Tennessee Healthcare

Ear Tube Placement

What is Ear Tube Placement?

Ear tube placement is the insertion of a small “plastic tube” into the middle of the ear to help decrease ear infections. This small tube helps to decrease the pressure in the middle of the ear. The tubes may stay in for months to allow the ear to heal. After the ear tubes are placed, you will not feel them.

Where is it done? How long does it take?

The surgery can be done at the West Tennessee Surgery Center or at the hospital. The actual surgery only takes 15-20 minutes. This time does not include your waiting time before surgery or your time in the Recovery Room afterward.

What should I do before the surgery?

You should not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery. Lab tests may be ordered by your doctor if necessary. You may brush your teeth, but do not swallow the water. Please do not wear any makeup, jewelry, piercings, nail polish, lotion, or perfumes. Ask your doctor whether you should take your medicines the morning of your surgery. Bring your pill bottles with you to the hospital. Wear comfortable clothes. You must have a responsible adult to drive you home after surgery.

What should I expect the day of surgery?

After you check in, you may be taken to your room or the pre-anesthesia unit. This area is where the nurses will get you ready for your surgery. You will wear a hospital gown. A nurse may write down your medical history. Some patients do not require an IV for this surgery. The doctor giving your anesthesia will make this decision. Most patients are given some medicine by mouth to make them drowsy. After the medicine starts working, you will be taken to surgery. Your family will be told where to wait. In surgery you may be given more medicine to make you sleepy through a mask over your nose and mouth.

After surgery, your doctor will talk to your family. The recovery nurse will call your family when you are ready to go to your room.

What should I expect after surgery?

After you wake up, you will be in the recovery area for about 30 minutes to one hour. Your nurse will watch your blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, and oxygen level. When you go to your room, you will usually stay there for one to two hours after surgery. When you are well awake, you will be given something

to drink and possibly something to eat. Let your nurse know if you have any nausea or pain.

How do I care for myself at home after having ear tubes?

- It is normal for the ear to ooze some after surgery. This drainage should not last longer than a week.
- You may feel some minor pain. Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) as directed by your doctor.
- If you are given ear drops, follow your doctor's instructions on how to use them.
- Do not let any water get into your ears. Do not go swimming until your doctor allows.
- You may have fever after ear tube placement. You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol) as directed by your doctor.
- Avoid the use of straws for a few days. Drinking with a straw increases the pressure in your ears.
- You may return to normal activity or school when your doctor allows.

Call your doctor if you:

- Have any pain or oozing from your ear(s) after a week.
- Have dizziness after one week.
- Have a fever higher than 100.5° twice.
- Have any other questions or concerns.