

# PATIENT INFORMATION

A publication of West Tennessee Healthcare

## Ear Tube Placement in Children

### **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, your child 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 the waiting time before surgery or the time when your child is waking up in the Recovery Room afterward.

### **What should we do before surgery?**

Your child should not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery. You may help your child brush his or her teeth, but ask them to spit out the water. Your child should not wear any makeup, jewelry, piercings, nail polish, lotion, or perfumes. If your child takes any medicines, ask your doctor whether you should have them take them the morning of surgery. Bring his or her pill bottles with you to the hospital. Dress your child in comfortable clothes.

### **What should we expect the day of surgery?**

After you check your child in, you may be taken to a room or the pre-anesthesia unit. This area is where the nurses will get your child ready for his or her surgery. If your child is very young, you will be allowed to stay with your child until he or she goes into surgery. Your child will wear a hospital gown. A nurse will ask questions about your child’s medical history. Some patients do not require an IV for this surgery. The doctor giving your child’s anesthesia will make this decision. Your child may be given some medicine by mouth to help make them drowsy. After the medicine starts working, he or she will be taken to surgery. You will be told where to wait. In surgery your child may be given more medicine through a face mask to make him or her sleepy.

After surgery, your child’s doctor will talk with you. The recovery nurse will call you when your child is ready to go to a room.

### **What should we expect after surgery?**

Your child may be in the recovery area for about 30 minutes to one hour after

surgery. His or her nurse will watch their blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, and oxygen level.

After surgery, patients usually go to a room for one to two hours. When your child is well awake, he or she will be given something to drink and possibly something to eat. Let your nurse know if your child has any nausea or pain.

### **How do I care for my child 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.
- Your child 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 child's ears. Follow doctor's instructions on how to protect your child's ears from water. Do not allow your child to go swimming until your doctor allows.
- Your child may have low level fever after ear tube placement. You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol) as directed by your doctor.
- If your child is still feeding from a bottle, hold them in a semi-sitting position when feeding them.
- Your child may return to normal activity or school when his or her doctor allows.

### **Call your child's doctor if your child:**

- Has any pain or oozing from his or her ear(s) after a week.
- Has dizziness after one week.
- Has a fever higher than 100.1° twice.
- Has any other questions or concerns.