

## D.J. VERRET, MD

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### **Post-operative instructions following Myringotomy with or without tube placement**

#### **General:**

Myringotomy means a surgically-created hole in the ear drum. After a myringotomy is performed, a tube is often placed in the hole to keep it open. This procedure is designed to allow equalization of pressure between the middle ear space and the outside environment. Myringotomy and tube placement are necessary when the eustachian tube (natural ventilation duct between the throat and middle ear) does not function properly. Generally, the pressure equalizing tube placed at the time of surgery remains in the ear drum anywhere between 4-18 months. Variable ear drum healing and different types of tubes can make this duration shorter or longer. The procedure is usually performed under local anesthesia (numbing medication only) in adults and general anesthesia (completely asleep) in children.

#### **Diet:**

There are no dietary restrictions following myringotomy and tube placement.

#### **Pain control:**

You may experience mild ear pain following myringotomy and tube placement. This is usually well controlled with over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol). Rarely are mild narcotic pain relievers prescribed by your surgeon.

#### **Ear Care Following Surgery:**

Please use the medicated ear drops as prescribed by your surgeon. Keep the ears as dry as possible. Avoid submerging your head under water, especially contaminated water (lake/ocean) or soapy water (bathtub), as this could allow entry into the middle ear space through the tubes causing temporary pain, vertigo or infection. Small amounts of clean water (shower or well-maintained pool) may enter the ear canal and usually do not cause problems while the tubes are in place. We recommend custom fit ear plugs or cotton balls with Vaseline to be placed in the ear each time water exposure is anticipated. If the ear canals feel wet after showering or swimming you may gently wipe the outer-most portion of the ear canal with a tissue (do not enter the ear canal with a Q-tip® or your finger). A hair dryer blown over the ear also helps to dry the ear canal.

#### **Ear Drainage:**

Expect a fair amount of drainage from the ears where new tubes have been placed, as this represents an accumulation of fluid in the middle ear space that needs to drain out of the ear over time. The antibiotic ear drops help facilitate this process. A small amount of bleeding is also not unusual for the first 2-3 days. Place a dry cotton ball in the ear canal as needed to keep this drainage from getting on your skin or clothing.

#### **Follow-up appointment:**

Your follow up appointment in the office will be 2-4 weeks following your surgery. This visit should be scheduled prior to your surgery. If you do not have the appointment made please contact our office.

#### **Please call our office immediately if you experience:**

- **Vertigo (room spinning or tumbling sensation)**
- **Acute significant loss of hearing**
- **Facial weakness**
- **Fever greater than 101 degrees Fahrenheit**