

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 to help stop repeated ear infections and prevent the build-up of fluid.

What happens after the surgery?

- Most often, your child will wake up within 30 minutes. When you join your child, do not be alarmed if your child is upset. Anesthesia may reduce self-control. This causes some children to cry or scream.
- When your child is calm enough to sit up and drink fluids, your child can go home.

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 may include:

- Keep your child home from day care or school the day of surgery and have them rest.
- Have your child drink plenty of fluids if not limited by the doctor.
 - 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. Your child’s 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 a 24-hour period.
 - Do not give acetaminophen to babies younger than 3 months of age without your doctor’s advice.
 - If your child is taking an antibiotic, give it as prescribed. **DO NOT** stop giving your child this medicine because they feel better unless advised by your child’s doctor.
- Take your child to all follow-up visits as scheduled.

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

Bilateral myringotomy with tubes, continued

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 any 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.