

**ROCKLAND EAR NOSE AND THROAT ASSOCIATES, P.C.**  
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**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR MYRINGOTOMY  
(TYMPANOSTOMY) AND TUBES**

**I. COMMON COMPLAINTS AND PROBLEMS**

**a. EAR PAIN**

- i. Tubes do not hurt
- ii. Ear pain may be referred from other procedures performed at the time of tube placement such as tonsillectomy and/or adenoidectomy.
- iii. Eardrops may have been placed in the operating room or may have been recommended for use after the tubes have been placed. Sometimes they will cause pain and burning. If this happens, stop using the drops.
- iv. People with ear infections or persistent fluid are sometimes very sensitive to loud sounds. This sensitivity can increase after tubes are placed. Avoidance of loud noise exposure and earplugs are sometimes helpful.

**b. EAR DRAINAGE**

- i. Fluid may drain from the tubes during the time the tubes remain in position within the eardrum. (Average 3-12 months)
- ii. The drainage may be yellow, clear, or bloody. If this is a new finding, we would like for you to call. Eardrops may be prescribed.
- iii. After drops are placed, it is advisable to place a cotton ball with Vaseline rubbed through it into the ear canal for 10 minutes to prevent the drops from falling out.

**II. ACTIVITY RESTRICTION (WATER PRECAUTIONS)**

- a. For the first week, we advise being careful about getting water into the ears. Earplugs or cotton balls with Vaseline rubbed through it are advised.
- b. One week after the tube insertion, the eardrums have usually healed around the tube. It is still advised to prevent soapy water from entering the ears. While washing the hair, do not immerse under the water. If you do not have plugs, close off the ear canal by pressing on the tragus (the little bump in front of the ear) while rinsing the hair.
- c. There is a controversy about using earplugs while swimming with tubes. Usually for surface swimming in a clean pool, plugs are optional. When diving below 3 feet, plugs are advisable. When in lake or pond water, we advise plugs.
- d. Our office has assorted plugs available for purchase, including custom-made ear molds.

III. Temporary tympanostomy tubes will generally be expelled from the eardrum spontaneously within 6 to 9 months from the time they were inserted. Occasionally they will be expelled sooner (3 months) and rarely, they will not expel (2 1/2 years) and may require surgical removal. When the tubes do extrude, they generally fall into the ear canal and accumulate wax. Sometimes they will be removed via irrigation or small tweezers. Once the tube comes out of position in the eardrum, the tube no longer is functioning and the eardrum heals up the surgical hole. Rarely, there may be a persistent hole that needs to be surgically corrected. We generally like to check the status of your ear tubes every 4 months. We will need the appropriate referral from your insurance company to check with an audiogram ( hearing test) and a tympanogram.