**Myringotomy and Tympanostomy Tubes (Ear Tubes) F**

**Preoperative Instructions**

**What are ear tubes?**

Ear tubes are tiny, hollow tubes that surgeons place into the eardrums during surgery. An ear tube allows air into the middle ear (space behind ear drum). Ear tubes keep fluid from building up behind the eardrums. The tubes usually are made of silicone, plastic, or metal. Ear tubes also are called tympanostomy tubes, ventilation tubes, myringotomy tubes or pressure equalization tubes.

Ear tubes might help patients who have repeated, long-lasting ear infections, also known as chronic otitis media. Ear tubes also might help patients who still have fluid buildup in the ear after an infection clears up. This is called otitis media with effusion.

Most ear tubes will fall out on their own within 4 to 18 months. Certain types of tubes are designed to stay in longer. Surgeons may need to remove a tube either in the office or with a second surgery if it fails to fall out on its own. The hole left behind in the eardrum after the tube comes out will heal/close on its own in the majority of cases. If not, this may require a surgical procedure to repair it.

**Risk of surgery:**

Ear tubes are overall well tolerated but not without some risk. Common risks are infection/drainage, hearing loss, hole in ear drum that may need additional surgery to repair. Risk of persistent hole in ear drum is roughly 3%, though may increase if the tube remains for a prolonged period.

**Before surgery:**

Typically, you can continue all regular medicines before surgery. Consult with the surgeon if you are taking medications that thin your blood (aspirin, Plavix, Coumadin, Warfarin, Xeralto, etc). Consult with pre operative clinic if there are questions about medications and their reactions with anesthesia that is planned to be used.

**Day of surgery:**

Ear tubes in children are typically preformed under anesthesia. You will see the anesthesiologist in the pre op area who will discuss the details. This is often done via medications delivered via a mask though occasionally a breathing tube may be utilized. The procedure is typically short, 10-20 minutes and patients go home the same day.

* If you have any questions **PRIOR TO SURGERY** or have questions about your insurance/benefits, please call **970-221-1177**

**Postoperative Instructions**

**Activity:**

Ear tubes are typically a quick recovery. Patients typically feel effects of anesthesia more than the ear tubes themselves. Fatigue/sleepiness are common later on the day of surgery. Usually, patients feel better the next day. If there is some discomfort, Tylenol or Ibuprofen can be utilized as needed.

**Ear Drops:**

You will be given and/or prescribed ear drops after surgery. It is important to do these as directed. These help to prevent post operative drainage and infection.

**Ear Plugs:**

Most patients don't need to wear earplugs while swimming or bathing unless a health care provider says to do so. There can be exceptions, and some kids are sensitive to water in the ear. If there are problems with water exposure, it often shows up as drainage from the ear. To treat this, restart the ear drops. Drainage often resolves within a few days. If it persists past a week, contact the office.

**Ear infections:**

Ear infections are possible in the future after ear tubes. They are often much less frequent, less severe, cause less symptoms and easier to treat. Ear infections show up as drainage from the ear. This is often resolved with antibiotic ear drops alone. If patient has drainage from ear, restart ear drops. If it persists past a week, contact the office.

**Eating and Drinking:**

There are no restrictions on diet after surgery. Anesthesia medications can sometimes cause nausea and vomiting. Generally, it is recommended to start with a bland diet and advance as tolerated to regular diet. Some sore throat is expected if a breathing tube is used.

**Follow up:**

A follow up hearing test is often obtained after ear tubes. Please schedule with our offices or a partnering audiology group 2-4 weeks after surgery. Following this, we typically recommend annual visits to check the status of the ear tubes and ear drums.

**For questions AFTER SURGERY, contact 970-221-1177**

**For emergencies after office hours, contact 970-221-1177 to speak to the ENT Provider on call.**