



**CHU
Sainte-Justine**
Le centre hospitalier
universitaire mère-enfant

Université 
de Montréal

Postoperative care - Myringotomy with tube placement

Information for the child and their family



This brochure contains all the information you need to facilitate your child's return home after surgery. It provides recommendations, answers to many questions and key contact details.

Please keep this brochure for as long as your child has ear tubes.

What is a myringotomy with tube placement?

It's a minor procedure in which a small incision is made in the eardrum and a tube is inserted. This is done to ventilate and drain your child's ear. The tubes usually remain in place for 6 months to 2 years and fall out naturally when the time comes. If they stay in longer, there's no need to remove them if the treating ENT specialist deems them to be useful. Follow-ups are required every 4–6 months until the tubes fall out and the eardrum closes.

In around 2% of cases, a small residual perforation will be present in the eardrum after the tube falls out and may have to be repaired around the age of 7–8.

What kind of care is needed after a myringotomy?

Protection against water

For the first 7 days after surgery (healing time), **you'll need to prevent your child's ears from coming into contact with water. The same applies in the event of any subsequent discharge.**

After the first 7 days, if there's no discharge, **no precautions are necessary when bathing, showering or swimming** in a clean pool (with chlorine or salt) or in **the sea, unless your child feels pain on contact with the water.** If this occurs, use cotton balls coated in petroleum jelly as earplugs (when bathing or showering) or have your child use swimming earplugs (often made of silicone, e.g., Speedo®) and wear a Velcro swimming headband

(e.g., Ear Band-It®) or a rubber swimming cap (both available at your local pharmacy) to prevent any discomfort from water entering the ears.

If required, silicone earplugs can be heated under warm/hot water to soften them and make them easier to put in.

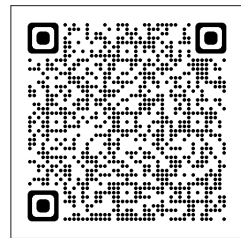
The products listed here are just some of the options available to you. Other models and brands may also be suitable for your child..

- ▶ Insertable earplugs generally work well for older children/teenagers.
- ▶ Soft, silicone plugs generally work well for younger children. Silicone can be divided into smaller pieces to fit different ear sizes.
- ▶ Swimming headbands are mainly sold online, but can be found in some pharmacies and sports stores.



Discharge

When your **child** has tubes, it's **normal** to see fluid draining from their ears if they have an infection (tubes allow for drainage in the event of an ear infection). **You'll have to use ear drops prescribed by your ENT specialist to treat the ear infection as soon as you see any discharge.** Note that if only one ear is draining, only that ear should be treated with drops.



Scan the QR code to see the instructional video (in French only).
<https://bitly.ws/3f43l>

Ear cleaning

If you notice any discharge, **twist a tissue into a spear** and use it to **clean your child's ear canal**. Continue until the tissue comes out clean to ensure that all discharge has been removed.



Never use cotton buds (Q-Tips®) in your child's ear canal. They can cause injuries and/or promote the formation of earwax plugs. If necessary, cotton buds can be used to clean the outside of the ear. You should always be able to see what you're cleaning.



Discharge treatment

- ▶ **After cleaning,** apply **4 drops of Ciprodex®** (ciprofloxacin and dexamethasone) or the prescription provided **twice a day** or as directed by your ENT doctor. You can use a small “cone” at the opening of the ear, but it’s usually not necessary.
- ▶ It’s best to put the drops in one at a time, so they go all the way into the ear.



- ▶ You should have your child **keep their head to the side for at least 3 to 5 minutes** to allow the drops to effectively penetrate the ear canal.
- ▶ **Apply Ciprodex® drops every day there's a discharge and another 2 days after the discharge has stopped to prevent the discharge** from drying out in the tubes and to clean the ear.
- ▶ An opened bottle of drops will keep for 4 months at room temperature.
- ▶ Note that cold drops may cause discomfort or dizziness in some children. We recommend warming the bottle of drops in your hand for a few minutes before use, to bring it up to body temperature.

Types of ear discharge and duration of treatment

There are 2 types of discharge, but the treatment is the same regardless of the type; the only difference is the number of days of treatment before you need to contact us.

- ▶ Non-bloody discharge (yellowish, orange, greenish, pus, mucus, etc.): up to 10 days of treatment with drops is acceptable.
- ▶ Bloody discharge (tinged with blood, reddish, pinkish, bloody secretions): up to 7 days of treatment with drops is acceptable.

In short, non-bloody discharge (despite cleaning and ear drops) can be tolerated for up to 10 days, and bloody discharge (despite cleaning and ear drops) can be tolerated for up to 7 days.

When should I contact the clinic?

If the discharge (of any type) continues for longer than the specified time, or if the discharge is too heavy for the drops to effectively penetrate the ear despite cleaning, you should contact the nurse at the ENT clinic.



514-345-4931, ext. 6041

Leave a detailed message explaining your child's situation, and the nurse will call you back in order of priority within the next 24 to 48 hours.

Please indicate your child's **file number** (at the top of their blue hospital card), their full name and the best **phone number** to reach you.

Additional information



No precautions are needed to prevent water from entering your child's ears when swimming **in a pool** (chlorine or salt) or in the sea.



For swimming in contaminated water (lakes, rivers and spas), we recommend protecting your child's ears from the water with swimming earplugs (available at your local pharmacy) and a swimming cap or headband.



Jumping or diving into water is prohibited for the entire life of the tubes. However, your child can jump off the edge of the pool as long as they don't go deeper than 1.5 m (5 ft). Jumping on a trampoline isn't recommended.



Water slides are strongly discouraged unless you protect your child's ears from the water with plugs and a rubber swimming cap available at your local pharmacy.



Your child can safely travel by plane. Just be sure to bring the drops and this brochure with you wherever you go. That way, if there's any discharge, you'll have what you need to treat it.



You can still use saline water to clean your child's nose if they have a cold or they're congested. Nasal irrigation may cause discomfort in your child's ears or cause water to come out of their ears. This means that the pressure and volume are too high. To prevent this from happening, simply reduce the pressure on the Sinus Rinse® bottle or the speed of syringe irrigation. If water discharge or pain persists, switch from bottle irrigation to gentle 3 mL syringe irrigation or to spray irrigation as needed.

Please note

If your child has functional tubes and they develop a fever and a discharge, it's usually due to a viral infection or an infection from a source other than the ears.



We generally recommend **consulting a physician (family doctor, general practitioner or pediatrician) if your child has had a high fever** (over 38.5 °C rectal, over 38.0 °C oral or over 37.5 °C axillary) for more than 72 hours without improvement despite regular administration of acetaminophen (every 4 hours) or an ibuprofen-based anti-inflammatory (Advil®, Motrin®, etc.) every 6 to 8 hours. Consult your pharmacist to determine the right dose for your child.

Contact us

- ▶ To **renew a prescription**, please contact your doctor and have them fax the renewal to us at 514-345-7781.
- ▶ To **schedule or change an appointment at CHU Sainte-Justine**, please call the appointment centre at 514-345-2141.
- ▶ To **schedule an appointment at the Bloom clinic** (formerly pediatric ENT clinic), go to www.cmme.ca/en
- ▶ If you have **any questions or need information on how to schedule a same-day appointment**, please call the ENT clinic at 514-345-4857.

Notes

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