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## MIDDLE EAR FLUID MYRINGOTOMY & TUBES

The middle ear is located behind the eardrum. The skin-like eardrum separates the outer ear canal, (where wax is located) from the middle ear. The middle ear contains the bones which pass on sound to the inner ear. The inner ear contains the hearing organ. The middle ear is an air-filled space which connects to the inside of the nose through a small tube.

### **Infection**

The middle ear can get infected. This happens when the tube (eustachian tube) which goes to the nose gets blocked. The lining of the middle ear makes fluid when it gets infected. Doctors give antibiotics to kill the infection in the fluid. If the Eustachian tube can drain the fluid and air gets back into the middle ear, no more treatment is needed.

60% of patients will clear fluid in 1 month, 80% in 2 months. Medicines can help, but time is needed to allow for return to normal.

### **Problems with Fluid in the Middle Ear**

The fluid in the middle ear can take weeks to months to drain. If the fluid does not go away:

1. Another active infection can occur
2. There is some hearing loss when fluid is present - the fluid may cause long term performance delays.

### **Myringotomy and Tubes**

If medicine and time cannot eliminate the middle ear fluid, surgery may be needed. A myringotomy is an opening that is made in the eardrum. Fluid can be removed through this opening. A small tube is usually placed in this opening to keep it open for a long period of time. This allows the middle ear lining to become more normal. Tubes usually remain in the eardrum between 6 months to a year and a half. The eardrum will usually heal and the tubes fall out.



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### **Complications:**

**Ear drainage** - even after tubes are placed, infection in the ear is a possibility. Ear drainage can occur as long as the tubes are in place and this occurs in about 1 out of 10 patients who has tubes placed.

**Perforation** - when tubes are placed in the ear the opening which has been made in the eardrum may remain even after the tubes have fallen out. This is uncommon, but can occur. Often these openings in the eardrum will close without further treatment. If they do not it is occasionally necessary to repair these eardrum openings.

**General anesthesia** - as with any surgical procedure, general anesthesia is used when tubes are placed. There is a remote but definite risk associated with any general anesthesia and this will be described by the Anesthesiologist to you.

### **Instructions Post-Operatively:**

A small amount of drainage from the ears is normal for the first few days after surgery, and this may be bloody.

If drops or medicines are prescribed, please use them as ordered.

Keep the ears dry. If you wash hair, please place cotton with Vaseline or use earplugs to keep the ears dry. This should be continued as long as the ear tubes are in place.

The usual follow-up is 4-6 weeks after surgery. Please call the office.