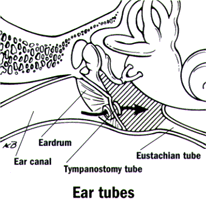


**Grommets**

Also known as Ventilation tubes, grommets are tiny plastic tubes which are inserted into a small slit in the ear drum. This is a short operation usually done under General Anaesthetic.



Grommets may be recommended to improve hearing in most patients with;

* Chronic glue ear - that causes a conductive hearing loss from the middle ear.
* Delayed speech development or learning difficulties
* Behaviour problems associated with hearing
* Stopping or slowing further damage to the ear drum and small bones of the middle ear
* Decreasing the frequency of infections in children who have recurrent otitis media.

With grommets in place, hearing loss caused by pre-existing fluid in the space behind the ear drum can be reversed. Parents often report a better quality of life for their children after grommet insertion with better sleeping and overall behaviour.

**After surgery:**

Once your child has recovered and is wide awake, they are usually allowed to go home, often 1-3 hours after the operation. They can eat and drink normally after surgery.

Follow the discharge instructions given from either the Hospital or ENT Specialist

Any ear pain is usually mild and pain-relieving medicine is given if required. *Never give aspirin to children or teenagers younger than 19 years of age for pain relief.*

It is recommended your child uses ear protection when swimming, shampooing, showering and bathing. Some children get ear infections if unsterile water gets into the middle ear. Your doctor may suggest some simple precautions such as soft silicone or putty ear plugs, or cotton wool with petroleum jelly. Cupping ears and protecting from entry of water and shampoo during bath time is useful. Children with grommets should be able to travel by air without any problems as the ear is not affected by changes in air pressure.

Your ENT Surgeon will want to see your child approx. 4 weeks after surgery with a hearing test to measure hearing improvement.

Most grommets last around 12 months in the ear depending on the age of the patient. Typically the eardrum will push the grommet out and it will be expelled from the ear canal over time. The hole that was present will close spontaneously in more than 95% of cases. Rarely a grommet may stay in place for >2years in which case it should be reviewed for possible removal by the doctor. Occasionally the hole which housed the grommet does not close spontaneously. Rarely this will need to be patch-closed by the doctor. This would be discussed in full with you if necessary.

If the ear develops discharge or pain then seek assistance from your Surgeon, call the practice (see below) or see your GP. Usually treatment with antibiotic ear drops are effective in clearing discharge. These should be prescribed for each individual.

We recommend considering review of the ears 6-12 months after your surgery. Your Doctor will advise further.

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