

## Collin County Ear Nose and Throat

### MYRINGOTOMY TUBE POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

You may have questions about the post-operative period. This sheet will address the most frequently asked questions. Read this carefully and keep it in a convenient place for easy reference. If you have questions that are not adequately answered or not covered by this instruction sheet, then please ask me during the post-operative rounds or call me during normal office hours.

#### **Immediate post-operative period**

The patient will likely be disoriented in the immediate post-operative period. This is due to the anesthetic agent(s) and may last up to several hours. The patient may have nausea and vomiting. This can be controlled with medication. Pain medication will be given as needed to alleviate the pain. Once the patient is awake enough, the recovery room nurse will give him/her something to drink. Once the patient can drink some liquid and keep it down, he/she can be released from the recovery area. At this point the patient will be discharged home when all of the discharge criteria are met.

#### **Medicines**

The patient will be discharged with antibiotic ear drops. It is important to take these drops as instructed; it will facilitate more rapid healing. Minor pain or fever should be treated with Tylenol.

#### **Activity Restrictions**

- 1) Avoid strenuous activities for the first day. The level of activity should be slowly increased after the first post-operative day as tolerated.
- 2) Absolutely no diving while the tubes are in place.
- 3) Swimming is only allowed if the patient has molded earplugs. Do not substitute with silicon plugs or with Silly Putty. These substances will soften due to the body's temperature and removal may require intervention in my office or the operating room.

#### **Post-operative Care**

Water precaution is critical. It is of utmost importance that water does not enter an ear canal with a myringotomy tube in the eardrum. Bath water, lake/ocean water, and even chlorinated pool water all carry bacteria which can cause an ear infection. Whenever the patient could be exposed to water, a protective plug should be placed in the ear canal(s), for the duration of the tubes. If just for bathing purposes, this plug can be a cotton ball saturated with any petroleum-based ointment, such as Bacitracin or even Vaseline; or it can be a molded earplug, which can be purchased from my office. Plugs can be made anytime after surgery; sometimes this can be as early as the same day of surgery if the ear canals are dry. Please call ahead to schedule for the plugs to be made.

#### **Return to Work/School**

Please read the section *Activity Restrictions*. Most patients are able to return to school or work within 1-2 days. I would not recommend resuming strenuous work until 2-3 days after surgery. School-aged patients may be excused from gym classes or school athletics for 1-2 days.

#### **Follow Up**

Call the office for a follow up appointment within 2 weeks. Post-operative audiogram and/or

tympanogram will be performed 6 weeks after that.

### **Anticipated Problems & Complications**

**Fever-** A low grade fever (<101 F/<38 C) is common during the first 48 hours after surgery. This can be readily treated with Tylenol. Please call if the temperature is >101.5 F/>38 C.

**Nausea/Vomiting** - This is not uncommon during the first 24 hours and usually disappears after 48 hours. The nausea could be a reaction to the anesthesia.

**Ear Pain** - This is usually limited to the first 48 hours and readily treated with Tylenol.

**Drainage** - There will be a small amount of bloody drainage from the ear for up to 5 days. This is normal. After that time, if you see drainage of any color, this may indicate an infection, and you should start antibiotic ear drops. If the ear is still draining 3 days later, call for an appointment. The ear may need to be suctioned out. Do not put in earplugs when the ear is draining.

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