



PARENTS' ADVICE SHEET – CHILD GROMMET INSERTION

Keep this information to hand for reference after your child's discharge.

A grommet is a tiny plastic tube placed in the eardrum, under microscope control, to ventilate the middle ear. The grommet acts to bypass the Eustachian tube, which often does not work well in young children but normally improves about age 7-9 years old. Grommet insertion is a small operation and your child can usually go home the same day if no other procedure is performed.

After insertion, for the first three weeks, until the grommets are bedded in, it is important that water does not enter the ear, to prevent infection:

Washing:

When washing your child's hair, bathing or showering, protect the ears by placing a plug of cotton wool covered with Vaseline in the opening of the ear canal.

Swimming:

Ideally no swimming for three weeks after surgery but if desperate to swim, use ear plugs for first three weeks.

After discharge from hospital

Bleeding/Discharge:

There may be slight bleeding/discharge from the ear during the first 24 to 48 hours after the operation, this is normal. You may carefully clean the outside of the ear but you should not try to clean inside the ear canal.

Popping:

Occasionally your child may complain of a sensation of popping, clicking or fullness in the ear(s). This is not harmful.

Ear drops:

Occasionally children will have ear drops prescribed which should be used as directed.

Pain:

Your child may complain of mild earache. You may give a painkilling medicine such as Calpol, Disprol or Paracetamol, or ibuprofen. Use as directed on the bottle. The earache should subside within 48 hours.

Hearing:

Hearing is often restored immediately but it may take a few days.

School:

Your child does not need to keep off school.

Follow-up:

You will receive an appointment for a post operative check up before you leave the ward – normally 4 – 6 weeks after the operation.

What to do if you have any worries or concerns after the surgery

If it is within 48 hours or out of hours, phone the ward where you were admitted for surgery. During office hours phone our secretaries on 0118 9213160.

Infection:

A discharge from ear persisting for longer than 48 hours may mean your child has an ear infection, and may require treatment with eardrops or antibiotics by mouth. You should contact your GP or our secretary.

Other information

It is safe to travel by air when grommets are in place.

Grommets normally fall out by themselves between 2 and 24 months with an average of 8 months. A small percentage can cause some scarring of the drum which is not normally significant, in about 2% of cases when the grommet falls out it may leave a small hole, which acts as a grommet, and can be patched up when the child is older.