Caring for Your Child After an Adenoidectomy, Myringotomy, and Tube Placement

What is an adenoidectomy, myringotomy and tube placement?
Your child’s surgery is designed to help with chronic ear problems. The adenoid is in the back of the nose behind the palate. It can cause problems with eustachian tube function. The eustachian tube helps balance the pressure. It is what allows you to “pop” your ears when you yawn or swallow in an elevator or an airplane. It removes fluid from the middle ear space behind the eardrum.

Removing the adenoid helps the eustachian tube function more normally. Myringotomy and pressure balanced tube placement creates a temporary artificial eustachian tube in the eardrum. This allows for immediate balance of pressure and any fluid in the ear to dry up.

What to Expect
- Your child will have a sore throat for up to a week.
- A small amount of bloody drainage from the nose is common.
- A low-grade fever is normal (up to 102°F), for up to 7 days after surgery.
- Neck pain is common for up to 10 days. A warm, not hot, heating pad, soaking in a warm bath, or massaging the neck may help.
- Foul-smelling breath is common for 2 to 3 weeks.
- Your child may have a nasal-sounding voice and snore for a while. This will go away in time. If it goes on longer than 3 months, please tell your doctor.
- Restless, disturbed sleep or nightmares may occur for a couple of weeks.
- It is common for children to have slight drainage from the ear for 1 to 3 days. The drainage may be bloody, clear, or pus-like.
- Ear drops are prescribed to be given 3 times a day for 3 days. Hold the bottle under warm tap water before giving ear drops. This may make the drops more comfortable for your child.

What to Do
- Your child may have an upset stomach from the anesthesia. Start with clear liquids and go to solid food when your child can handle it. If vomiting begins, start over with clear liquids.
- Have your child drink a lot of fluids. Offer liquids often, even if they are just sips.
- Your doctor may suggest giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®), with ibuprofen. You will be told of the dosages for the medicines.
- Your child may go back to school or daycare in 2 to 5 days, if well enough. Normal routines may resume when feeling better.
- Ear plugs are not needed for most children with tympanostomy tubes. There are some situations where your provider may recommend use of ear plugs. For example, if your child has ear pain or drainage after swimming.
Follow-up
Your child will be scheduled for a post-op follow-up visit, at the Pediatric ENT clinic 1-3 months after surgery.

When to Call Your Child’s Doctor or Clinic Nurse
- Nausea and vomiting that doesn’t go away,
- A fever over 102° regardless of the method used to take a temperature,
- Bleeding from the nose or mouth that doesn’t stop,
- Discomfort that doesn’t go away after Tylenol® and ibuprofen are taken,
- Ear pain that goes on for more than 3 days,
- Ear drainage that continues after the ear drops stop,
- If you think your child is not recovering as expected.

Tube Maintenance
It is normal for ears to drain from time to time while tubes are in place. This drainage tells us there is fluid in the middle ear space. This could cause infection if not treated. The drainage may be clear, yellow, white, green or bloody.

Call the clinic number listed below to report that your child’s ear(s) have drainage. Nursing staff will start the process for your child to take therapeutic ear drops. You will be given specific directions on how to give the ear drops.

Once you have the ear drop medicine, you may treat your child’s ear drainage. Call the clinic if the drainage does not stop within the time frame given.

Phone Numbers
If you have any questions or concerns when at home, please call:

Pediatric Otolaryngology (ENT) Clinic
(608) 265-7760 weekdays from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

After Hours and Weekends
This number will give you the paging operator. Ask for the Otolaryngology (ENT) doctor on call. Give the operator your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

If outside of Madison, call toll-free at: 1-800-323-8942.