

**Postoperative Care:
Grommets/Middle Ear Ventilation
Tubes**

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Grommets, ear tubes, or middle ear ventilation tubes (MEVT) are little plastic tubes inserted through the ear drums to prevent recurrent middle ear infections or to relieve fluid ("glue") in the ear and aerate the middle ear.

Grommet insertion is done as a day procedure. Some blood and blood-stained discharge from the ear is expected in the first couple of days. Some patients may be discharged with ear drops (3 drops 2 times a day for 3 days), while the majority won't be. Paracetamol is usually sufficient for postoperative pain relief.

A hearing test is organised at 4-6 weeks after procedure. Then 6-monthly check ups will be done until the grommet is eventually extruded. A repeat hearing test is sometimes performed a few months after grommet extrusion if the patient still has ongoing problems. Most grommets are extruded by 8-24 months, or earlier if repeated infections. If a grommet is still retained 3+ years after insertion, it will require removal by an ENT surgeon.

While the grommet is in it is preferable that water precautions is adhered to. This is often hard to do in kids. It is best to avoid all water in the ears for the first four weeks while the grommets are settling in place. After this, water in the bath or shower is usually fine. A little bit of water is not a major issue. However, if swimming, water sports or diving was considered, investing in a good set of earplugs and a swimmer's headband is worthwhile as the grommet will be in the ears for up to a year or more. Headbands and ear plugs can be bought at most major pharmacies, or check out "Little Grommets" and "Doc's Proplugs".

Having some clear discharge from the ear after swimming is expected. You can use tissue spears (twirl the tip of a soft facial tissue) to mop the ear. If it becomes an infection, it is safe to use certain antibiotic ear drops even while the grommets are in. If there are any significant concerns, it is recommended that the patient be seen by a doctor either at the GP practice, the Emergency Department or in my rooms. We are unable to give a safe advice over the phone without directly examining the patient. Do not hesitate to contact our office for further advice if required.