

ENT

Myringotomy of Insertion of Grommets

Introduction

Grommets are very small plastic tubes which sit in a cut made in the eardrum (myringotomy). They allow air in and out of the ear to keep it healthy.

Why do we use grommets?

Some children get fluid behind their eardrum - this is called 'glue ear'. It is very common in children, although we do not know exactly why it occurs.

Guidance for Patients and Parents

It is a short operation (10-20 minutes) carried out under general anaesthetic, using a microscope; a small cut is made in the ear drum. The glue is sucked out of the ear using a fine sucker and a grommet placed in the cut in the ear drum. Grommets usually last between 6 months and a year. As the ear drum grows they fall out by themselves- you may not notice when this happens.

Your child may complain of earache following this operation. This is normal but should not last long. In hospital the nurses will give Paracetamol if your child needs painkillers. You should continue with this at home if your child has any pain. Please follow the instructions carefully and do not give your child more than the stated dose.

While you are waiting, you can use any extra time in a positive way to help your child to be healthier before their surgery. This can reduce the risk of complications, support their recovery and benefit their long-term health. Here are the ways that your child and whole family can be put yourself in the best place to have your surgery.



By your side

- Eating more healthily – A healthy diet is important to a child's development, and even more important prior to surgery. Preventing iron deficiency can reduce the risk of requiring a blood transfusion and improve recovery after surgery. Iron rich diets are the best way to achieve this, although sometimes iron supplements are necessary to top up iron levels.

- Getting control of asthma – Asthma is common in childhood and if poorly controlled can cause problems during the anaesthetic. An assessment of the level of control can be made using the Asthma Control Test (www.asthmacontroltest.com). If support or improvements are required please seek advice from your GP or practice asthma nurse.

- Creating a smoke-free home – Children who are exposed to environmental tobacco smoke are twice as likely to suffer airway or breathing problems during or after the operation. If you, or a family member, would like support stopping smoking visit the NHS website for advice and support.

- Getting the right vaccinations – It's important that children and adults have vaccinations at the right time for the best protection. If you or your child have missed a vaccine, contact your GP to catch up.

- Moving more – National guidelines for physical activity recommend 180 minutes per day for pre-schoolers and 60 minutes per day for school-age children.

- Having a health check – If your child is over 14 years of age and has a learning disability they can have a free annual health check at your GP surgery.



Health and wellbeing if you have to wait

If, for any reason, your child's condition gets worse or you are worried about one of the below please see your GP, call 111 or seek urgent medical attention.

- High temperature
- Not eating
- Not drinking
- Persistent vomiting
- Increased Pain



Contact us

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