

Cleveland Head and Neck Clinic

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PE TUBE INSTRUCTION SHEET

Your child is to undergo general anesthesia, usually with anesthetic gases through a mask, in order to have small plastic tubes inserted into the tympanic membrane/ear drums. An IV is not required when no other surgery is being performed at the same time. The following instructions are to help you understand our procedure for these cases.

1. On the morning of the surgery, bring your child dressed in clean pajamas or clothes to the surgery center or hospital by the time given to you by the facility. Please do not be late.
2. After surgery, your child will probably have cotton in one or both ears which can be removed in a few hours. It may be replaced with clean cotton prior to this time, if necessary. Any bloody fluid on the cotton is normal. There should be little pain. Any pain can be usually managed with liquid Tylenol or ibuprofen by mouth, using the dosage recommended for age and weight on the bottle. Antibiotic eardrops will also be prescribed.
3. You should have an appointment to see the doctor approximately 2 weeks after the date of surgery. Call the office for an appointment if you do not already have one, or if you have any questions or problems.
4. The tubes usually stay in the eardrum between 6 and 18 months (average for one year), and usually come out on their own. Occasionally, they need to be removed surgically if they stay in place for several years. Unless instructed otherwise, the ears may get wet bathing, but avoid lying back in dirty soapy bath water. Surface swimming in clean chlorinated pool water is usually permitted without the use of earplugs. Diving is not recommended.
5. When the tubes extrude out of the eardrum, about 1% leave a hole in the eardrum that may need to be repaired surgically. Usually your surgeon will check the ears every few months to be sure that the eardrums heal once the tubes come out.