Women's & Children's Hospital

Middle Ear Surgery

Types of surgery

There are many types of ear surgery;

> Tympanoplasty or Myringoplasty - to repair a hole in the eardrum
> Mastoidectomy - to remove infection from the mastoid bone
> Cochlear implant - to restore hearing by placing an implant in the inner ear that will send sound signals to the brain

After Surgery

Some children may be upset on return from surgery. This can be normal after an anaesthetic and they should settle after a short time. The nurse will watch your child closely after surgery and will check your child's pulse rate, breathing and pain levels.

Your child will have a bandage around their head, covering the ear where the surgery was done. This bandage has to stay on until the next day when the surgeon or nurse removes the outer ear bandage. There may be some swelling and numbness on the side of the face after surgery for few days.

It is best to let your child rest in bed after surgery as any sudden movements can make them dizzy. Some children may feel sick and vomit after surgery. Please tell your nurse if your child feels sick or vomits.

Your child will return from surgery with an intravenous cannula (IV), a drip with fluids running to keep them hydrated. Medicine may also be given through the IV if your child feels sick or vomits many times.

The day after surgery your child will be seen by the surgeon and the ear bandage will be removed. If there is ear packing inside the ear it is left in place and the nurse will put another smaller dressing on their ear to protect the packing.

Pain management

The type of pain relief needed after surgery depends on the surgery. Your child will be given pain medicine during their surgery and should be comfortable on return to the ward. Please tell your nurse if you feel that your child is in pain.

Before you take your child home the nurse will talk to you about what pain medicine to give at home.

Eating and drinking

Your child can start drinking as soon as they are fully awake. They will be offered a light diet in hospital when they are ready to eat. Babies can breast feed or bottle feed straight away.

Your child should not have fatty or junk food for approximately 24 hours after surgery.

At home

Nausea and vomiting

Do not be worried if your child vomits once or twice after leaving hospital.

If they vomit or feel sick, stop giving food for about an hour, then try a light diet like toast and give more as your child can manage without feeling sick.
If your child keeps vomiting, please seek medical attention by either calling your child’s surgeon or your nearest emergency department.

Activity
Your child should reduce their activities for a few days and will need to stay home from school or childcare until they are fully recovered from the surgery. Your child should also avoid the following:

- All Sport activities including swimming
- Rough play
- Heavy lifting or bending
- Plane travel.

When your child has a bath or shower, avoid getting the dressing wet. If you need to wash your child’s hair keep the dressing dry by holding a foam cup over the ear.

In the first week following surgery your child should not:

- Blow their nose. Instead encourage sniffing and sneezing with mouth open
- Lie on the side of the surgery

Wound care
Your child’s care at home will be explained to you by the nurse. Do not remove the dressing or ear packing until your child’s follow up appointment. Contact your local GP or private surgeon if the ear packing falls out or if there is fluid coming out of the ear.

Follow up appointments
An appointment to see the surgeon will often be made for your child prior to going home from hospital. Please check with your child’s surgeon or nurse before going home.

Contacts
If you have any concerns after your child’s discharge please telephone your private consultant, local doctor or the Women’s and Children’s Hospital

During office hours, Monday to Friday you can call the following ward at the Women’s and Children’s Hospital:

- Campbell Ward on (08) 8161 7232

After hours enquiries call the Women’s and Children’s Hospital switchboard on (08) 8161 7000 and ask to speak with the Ears Nose and Throat registrar on call:

In an emergency situation, call an ambulance or take your child to the nearest doctor or hospital.

For more information
Paediatric Surgical Ambulatory Service
Women’s and Children’s Hospital
72 King William Road
North Adelaide SA 5006
Telephone: (08) 8161 7000
www.wch.sa.gov.au

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