Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Myringotomies and Grommets

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Myringotomies and Grommets

Patient Information

Children’s ENT

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Introduction

When your child is admitted on to Rainbow Ward you will find that staff will encourage you, as much as possible to be involved in your child's care, both pre and post operatively. For this reason, we have put together a list of questions that are frequently asked. We hope that they will be of benefit to both you and your child.

What is a myringotomy?

It is a tiny hole in the eardrum; it will heal quickly leaving the eardrum intact.

What is a grommet?

It is a small tube which may be made of Teflon or titanium which is inserted into the myringotomy.

Why is a grommet inserted?

A grommet is inserted if there is a thick sticky fluid known as "glue" present behind the eardrum. Grommets are also used to prevent or treat infections in the middle ear.

What effect does the fluid or "glue" have on my child's hearing?

Normally there is "air" in the middle ear behind the eardrum. The middle ear contains three small bones called the ossicles; these bones vibrate, allowing sound to be transmitted across to the "nerve of hearing". If "glue" or fluid is present in the middle ear, the eardrum is

unable to vibrate as freely, causing hearing loss.

How long does the operation take?

The operation usually takes about 15 to 20 minutes, but your child will need to spend about 30 minutes in the recovery area after the operation.

Will my child experience any pain after the operation?

Some children can experience some mild discomfort in their ears following the operation; paracetamol may be given for this.

How long will my child be in hospital?

Your child should only be in hospital for a morning or an afternoon and may go home as soon as they have had something to eat and drink, providing the doctors and the nursing staff are happy for them to do so.

Is there anything I need to watch out for when my child goes home?

Fluid, occasionally blood stained, may appear in and around the ear for 2 to 3 days following the operation, but if this continues, or your child is still complaining of pain, you should contact Rainbow Ward on 01942 778762 or 778763, open 24 hours per day.

How long do grommets stay in place?

As long as you take the advice given on discharge, the grommets should stay in place and fall out on their own after approximately 6 to 12 months. The hole will then usually heal,

leaving the eardrum intact.

Will my child be seen in clinic after the operation?

Yes, your child will normally be seen in clinic about 6 to 12 weeks after the operation. You will normally be given this appointment when your child is discharged from the ward.

Will my child need any further operations?

About 80% of children will require no further treatments, others may require a second insertion of grommets, and some may need to have their adenoids removed if they are enlarged and blocking the Eustachian tube.

Can my child wash his/her hair?

It is important that you protect your child's ears when washing their hair. This can be achieved by using plugs which can be gently inserted into the ears. The plugs can be made using cotton wool smeared with a small amount of Vaseline.

Can my child go to the swimming baths?

Your child may attend the swimming baths, but swimming at the seaside is not advisable. It is important that they wear earplugs as described above. They must not however participate in diving or underwater swimming.

Is it safe for my child to fly?

Flying is less likely to cause discomfort in a child with a grommet in their ear. The grommet allows air in and out of the ear and reduces the stress on the eardrum caused by changes of

air pressure in the plane.

Contact Information

Rainbow ward is open 24 hours per day and can be contacted on telephone:

01942 778762 or **01942 778763**



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