

Patient Information

After Grommet Insertion

Ear, Nose & Throat

Introduction

Caring for Yourself After Your Operation

Grommets are small tubes placed in the eardrum to help improve hearing and reduce ear infections. The following advice will help your ear heal and reduce the risk of complications.

After Your Surgery

- It is normal to notice a small amount of blood-stained or pale-yellow discharge from the ear for the first 1–2 days after surgery.
- If the discharge continues for longer than a few days, becomes heavy, or develops an unpleasant smell, please contact your GP, as you may need ear drops.
- Do not place anything inside your ear, including cotton buds, as this can cause damage or increase the risk of infection.
- The grommet may fall out on its own over time. You may notice a very small tube-shaped object in ear wax which may look like a tiny cotton reel. This is normal and nothing to worry about.

Looking After Your Ear

Keeping the ear dry is important while the grommet is in place.

- You may bathe or shower as normal after you go home.
- When washing your hair or showering:
 - Place a small piece of cotton wool coated with petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline®) in the outer ear.
 - Remove it straight away once you have finished washing.
- Try to avoid getting water into the ear canal.
- Only clean the outside of the ear.

Swimming and Water Activities

- Surface swimming is usually allowed but avoid putting your head under water unless your doctor advises it is safe.
- Avoid diving or swimming underwater, as this can force water through the grommet and increase the risk of infection.

Air Travel

- You can travel by airplane after grommet insertion.
- The grommet helps to balance pressure in the ear, which may reduce discomfort or earache during flying.

When to Seek Medical Advice

Please contact your GP if you experience:

- Ear discharge that lasts more than a few days.
- Increasing or persistent discharge.
- Discharge that becomes thick, heavy, or has an unpleasant smell.
- Increasing ear pain, swelling, or any other concerns.

Advice After General Anaesthetic

A general anaesthetic can affect your memory, concentration and reaction times for up to 24–48 hours after your operation.

If you are discharged home on the day of your surgery, a responsible adult should stay with you for at least the first 24 hours.

For the first 24–48 hours, you should avoid:

- Driving.
- Drinking alcohol.
- Smoking or vaping.
- Operating machinery or using potentially dangerous equipment, including kitchen appliances.
- Signing important or legal documents.

If You Have Any Questions

If you have any concerns after your surgery, please contact the Alexandra Day Surgery Unit on: 01279 973484 or 01279 973482

If you need information about your follow-up appointment, please contact the Appointments Team on: 01279 827391

If you would like this leaflet in another language or format, or you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net