



**FARMINGTON**  
EAR, NOSE & THROAT



Justin W. Roberts, D.O., Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

501 W. Pine St., Farmington, MO 63640

Phone (573) 756-8888 Fax (573)701-9547

## **POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRESSURE EQUALIZATION TUBES (PE TUBES)**

The following are instructions for patients who have had PE tubes placed. Please refer to this sheet and if it does not satisfactorily answer your questions do not hesitate to call my office at any time.

### **PE Tube (Overview)**

PE tubes are small flanged tubes that are placed in an incision made in the tympanic membrane (ear drum). The purpose of the PE tubes is to equalize pressure between the outside atmosphere and the middle ear space (cavity behind ear drum). This pressure is usually equalized by the Eustachian tube, which is a pressure equalization tube that naturally occurs deep inside the head. Various maladies (upper respiratory infections, adenoid enlargement, allergy, tumors and others) can result in dysfunction or non-function of the Eustachian tube, which can necessitate the placement of PE tubes. The most common reason for placing PE tubes is otitis media with effusion (fluid behind the ear drum) and recurrent otitis media (ear infection).

### **Postoperative Care**

A small to moderate amount of blood may be present in the ear canal the first several days after surgery. **DO NOT** try to clean the ear with anything other than a wash cloth draped over the fingertip, as any instrumentation in the ear canal may result in problems.

If an ear infection occurs with a PE tube in place a moderate to profuse drainage will occur through the tube into the external ear and will become noticeable in the ear canal. This will require treatment with antibiotics. **DO NOT** place any medications in the ear that have not been prescribed by a physician. You will receive a bottle of ear drops, some are placed at the time of surgery.

Little, if any, pain should occur following PE tube insertion and regular Tylenol can be used for this discomfort. The tubes are designed to come out on their own and this usually occurs in a 6-12 month time frame. Occasionally the tubes will come out earlier or stay in longer. Special considerations are given to long lasting PE tubes and these will be discussed on an individual basis.

### **Activity**

As long as the tubes are in place it is important to avoid certain activities. These include swimming under water, diving in water, and exposure to lake and stream water or getting any fluid in the area that is under pressure (such as direct pouring of water in the ear or direct exposure of the ear canal to the shower). Splashing in the tub, swimming pool or swimming on top of the water can be tolerated by some and not by others. However, there is always the possibility of an infection from these activities.

**Do not drive if taking any narcotic for pain or medication for dizziness in the post op period or after any treatments. The patient fully understands this warning.**

**I will be seeing you every 6 months until the tubes come out and the ear drums heal.** Please call the office if you have any problems or questions. After hours, you can reach me through the hospital switchboard. 573-756-6451

Your Follow-Up Appointment is \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_