

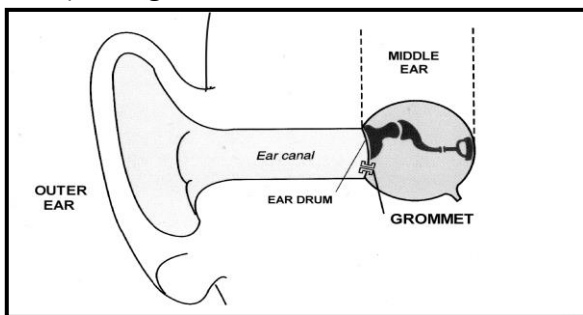
# Following insertion of grommets, Discharge Information

Parent/Caregiver Information

Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Service

Your child is now ready to go home after receiving surgery and a general anaesthetic to have grommets inserted.

The surgeon has made a small incision (hole) in your child's eardrum and inserted a plastic tube, called a grommet (also known as a ventilation tube). The grommet sits in the eardrum like this:



The grommet allows air to enter the middle ear. The grommet will be pushed out of the ear drum by the body's normal healing process any time from several months to two or more years after insertion. Usually when the grommet is pushed out the ear problem will have resolved. Occasionally it is necessary to insert the grommet(s) again.

## Going Home

You child will be able to go home once he/she has made a full recovery from their anaesthetic.

Some side effects following anaesthesia may include sore/dry throat, slight cough, dizziness/feeling faint, headache, shivering, muscle aches/weakness and itchiness/rash. These symptoms are usually temporary and not a problem. Other symptoms like nausea, vomiting or mild discomfort/pain can be helped with other medications. Please let your child's nurse or doctor

know if they have any nausea, vomiting or pain after surgery.

Most children appear quite alert and active when they are discharged from hospital. However your child may complain of feeling dizzy or tired. This is to be expected, you should encourage your child to rest.

Sometimes children are less steady than usual. This lack of coordination can last for 24 hours, and you should ensure that your children's activities are supervised by a responsible adult.

Your child should not go up and down stairs on their own, ride a bike, skateboard or undertake any outdoor activities for 24 hours.

Children usually recover very rapidly and should be able to return to school after a day or two.

## Pain Relief

Your child may need pain relief to help with any discomfort as the anaesthetic wears off. Your child's surgeon will usually prescribe pain relief for a day or two. Please do not exceed the dosage recommended for your child's age and please do not give aspirin to children under 16 years of age.

If your child is prescribed antibiotics and/or ear drops, please ensure they complete the course.

## Ear discharge

There may be a small amount of bleeding from the ear during the first 12 to 24 hours after the operation and a slight discharge for the first week; this is normal. After this time there should be no

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more discharge. If the ear runs persistently, and especially if the discharge is smelly, that means an ear infection. This can happen if water gets in the ear canal, or if your child has a cold or chest infection. If this happens you need to take your child to your family doctor (GP).

Please do not put anything in your child's ear, this includes cotton buds. You can clean the outside of their ear with a soft damp cloth but never inside the ear canal.

## Swimming

Unless your child's surgeon has told you otherwise, keep your child's ears dry until they have been reviewed at their first follow-up appointment after surgery.

After this appointment your child may go swimming in clean sea water or very clean swimming pools. If your child complains of ear discomfort or gets ear infections after swimming, their ears should be protected by waterproof ear plugs (available from a pharmacy) or by wearing a swimming cap each time they swim.

Remember that as long as your child has grommets in their ear(s), your child must not

- Dive
- Swim at deep levels underwater
- Go into spa pools or hot pools (e.g. Rotorua)

## Hair washing

If your child complains of ear discomfort or has ear infections after hair washing, you may need to protect their ears from soapy water. Soapy water can slide through the tiny hole in the grommet more easily than plain water. You can protect the ears using waterproof ear plugs, or by placing a piece of cotton wool with Vaseline on it or blutack

in the outer part (shell) of the ear. Be careful the piece is not too small as it may get pushed inside the ear canal and get lost.

## Are there any problems with grommets in the ear drums?

In some children the grommet stays in the ear drum too long (more than 4 years or so) and then needs to be removed.

Very occasionally, the little hole in the ear drum does not heal properly when the grommet comes out – this may require a surgical repair when your child is older.

## Follow-up

Your child will need to have follow-up appointments. The first one will be a few weeks after the surgery. It is very important that your child attends these appointments for their grommet(s) to be checked.

If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's surgery please contact your own family doctor (GP) in the first instance.

## Additional comments

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## Contact us

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