

Middle-ear and mastoid surgery are performed under microscopic vision for extreme precision. The suggestions below should help with a rapid recovery.

Taking Care of the Ear:

Prevent water from entering the ear for about two months when washing your child's hair by placing cotton saturated with Vaseline in the outer ear opening. Cotton in the outer ear opening may be changed as needed during the first few days to absorb drainage, but *do not* attempt to clean or remove any packing from inside the ear canal. *Absorbable stitches*, if present, do not require removal, and usually dissolve within five to seven days. If the stitches are not covered with tape, apply an antibiotic ointment 2-3 times a day for two weeks.

Ear drops should be used as directed, but in general, place four drops in the operated ear twice daily for two weeks. Replace the cotton ball after each application.

If an “ear-cup” dressing was used, it can be removed tomorrow morning. If it is not uncomfortable, it should be worn at night for a week to keep from lying on the ear. Swimming is not allowed until your surgeon says it is okay.

Dealing with Pain:

Mild intermittent pain *may* occur during the first two weeks, particularly above or in the ear, when chewing. If the skin around the surgical area is sensitive, it may be covered with several fluffed-up gauze pads for cushioning. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be used as directed, but ibuprofen products (Motrin, Advil) are avoided because they can increase the chance of bleeding. A stronger pain medication may be prescribed if mastoid surgery was performed.

Some Things Not to Worry About:

A *hoarse* or *abnormal voice* may occur for several days from the anesthesia tube. *Numbness* of the skin around the surgical incision is common, and should gradually subside within several days or weeks. *Popping* or *clicking sounds* may be heard, along with a feeling of *fullness* or *liquid* in the ear; these will resolve gradually as the healing process continues. A mild degree of *dizziness* may be present on head motion, and is not of concern unless it increases. *Hearing* may be temporarily worse after surgery because of swelling of the ear tissues and packing in the ear canal; improvement occurs over several months. *Taste disturbance* and *mouth dryness* may occur for a few weeks.

When to Call the Doctor:

(1) *discharge from the ear* lasts longer than seven days, or shows signs of infection (yellow color, foul odor, or high fever), (2) packing or material from inside the ear canal falls out (don't panic), (3) the skin *around* the sutures becomes swollen, red, or very tender (please note that some redness of the incision itself is normal), (4) the stitches break or the incision begins to open up, or (5) your child seems to be getting worse-not better-as the days go by. Your doctor will arrange a postoperative visit to check the healing process and to remove sutures (if necessary).

For Questions or Emergency Care:

Call the office at **601-984-5160**. You may need to speak with the doctor on-call.