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GROMMETS, OR VENTILATION TUBES

Why have grommets inserted?

Grommets are used to treat the presence of middle ear fluid (glue ear) which causes hearing loss. The grommet(s) help your hearing by ventilating the ear and simultaneously improve hearing.

What are Gommets?

Grommets are small plastic tubes (they can be short or long). The shorter tubes usually fall out on their own after six to eight months, and long tubes stay for a few years and must be removed by a doctor.

How does this work?

Grommets regulate normal middle ear pressure by allowing air into the space on the other side of the ear drum, so that it is the same as the external pressure. This helps the ear to remain healthy.

Will general anesthesia be required?

It can be done under local or general anesthesia. In children it is always done under general anesthesia.

What happens during surgery?

A small incision is made in the eardrum. A microscope is used during surgery to see well. Any mucus from the middle ear is removed and the tube is inserted.

When can you return home?

The surgery is very short. You can go home the same day.

When should you come for a review?

Usually one week after surgery when we will do hearing tests (audiogram).

What care is needed after ear surgery?

Plain water will not go through a grommet, it is too small. However, pressured water and water containing soap or shampoo may pass through the tubes. For this reason you must be careful when you bathe or wash your hair. In these situations, it is advisable to place cotton with Vaseline into your ears. You can swim if you want but do not dive.

What problems can occur after this surgery?

The insertion of the grommet is considered a very small operation. Immediately after surgery, your ear may be a little sore, you may feel dizzy. If liquid begins to flow from the ear, you need to be examined immediately.

What happens when the grommet comes out?

The hole in the eardrum usually heals after the grommets fall out. Permanent holes in the eardrum are very rare and happen in less than 2% of cases. If this happens you may need further surgery to close the hole.