

Day Surgery Unit

Information for patients undergoing Minor Ear Operations

Minor ear operations may be necessary to either:

- Remove hard wax from the ear;
- To make a more detailed assessment than is possible in the outpatients clinic;
- To allow the insertion of grommets for the condition of glue ear (secretory otitis).

All these procedures usually require a general anaesthetic, where you will be put to sleep, but no cuts are made or stitches used.

In glue ear, blockage happens in the tube which connects the back of the nose with the ear, resulting in the space behind the ear drum becoming filled with fluid instead of air. This fluid interferes with the hearing by reducing vibrations of the ear drum produced by sound, (resulting in significantly reduced hearing) and if the pressure of the fluid is high, earache will result.

There are several operations which can be done to help your condition. You may have one or more of the following procedures:

Examination under Anaesthetic

This allows the surgeon to have a detailed look at your ear whilst you are asleep.

Myringotomy

A tiny hole is made in the ear drum to allow the fluid to be sucked out.



Patient Information

Grommets

A grommet is a small white tube which is shaped like a bobbin reel. It is inserted into the small hole (myringotomy) to keep the hole open to assist ventilation to the middle ear. It does not cause pain and stays unseen in the ear for 6 – 12 months. Grommets are squeezed out slowly by the eardrum until they fall out of their own accord. They are usually unseen when they do, being lost in bed clothes/clothes.

T-tubes

T-tubes have exactly the same purpose as grommets but they are 'T' shaped and therefore they stay in longer. T-tubes usually stay in the ear for 2 - 3 years and have to be surgically removed.

After the operation

When you have a minor ear operation you will usually be given a general anaesthetic which means you will be asleep for the procedure.

- The operation will take about 10 minutes;
- You will then remain in recovery for around another 10 minutes;
- Once you are awake you will be returned to the ward where you will be checked by a nurse;
- You will remain on the ward for a minimum of 1 hour to recover from your anaesthetic;
- The surgeon and anaesthetist must both agree on your discharge before you leave the ward.

Discharge

- A letter will be posted to your GP explaining the operation you have had and any medication you may be sent home with;
- If you require an outpatients appointment you will be notified accordingly;
- If you have any queries or concerns do not hesitate to ask the nursing staff.

Going home

- If you have had a general anaesthetic a responsible adult must collect you from the ward when you are ready to be discharged;

Patient Information

- You will not be allowed to go home alone in a taxi;
- You must arrange for a responsible adult to stay with you for 24 hours after your operation.

Please note that if you have had sedation, for 24 hours after the procedure, you must not:

- Take alcohol;
- Operate heavy machinery;
- Sign any legally binding documents.

At home

Pain Relief

Discomfort after minor ear operations is usually slight. If you require pain relief it is advisable to take Paracetamol-based products. Always read the instructions on medicines carefully

If there is oozing from the ear

During the first 24-48 hours after minor ear operations there might be a slight discharge of blood from the ear. This doesn't usually last long and requires no treatment. If the discharge persists please contact your GP.

Bathing, washing of hair

Please try to keep water out of your ear as this can cause pain. When washing your hair: smear cotton wool with Vaseline, and place gently just into the ear.

Please remember to remove the cotton wool afterwards

Swimming

It is advisable not to go swimming until your next outpatient appointment. If this is a problem, ask your surgeon for advice on admission. However, when you do go swimming make sure you do not dive underwater as the pressure changes in the ear may dislodge the grommet.

Patient Information

Eating and drinking

You may eat and drink as normal once you arrive home.

Nursery/School/Work

Do not return to work or school for 48 hours. This will allow for:

- The anaesthetic to wear off;
- You to adapt comfortably to the changes of noise level.

Convalescence

You may feel tired once you return home. This may last a few days; you must be prepared to recover from your operation at your own speed.

Further Information

If you require any further information or have any concerns, do not hesitate to contact:

The Day Surgery Unit:

Telephone 024 7696 6868 or 024 7696 6861

Open 8.00am to 9.00pm.

Or alternatively **contact your own GP**.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6868 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

Document History

Department:	Day Surgery Unit
Contact:	26868
Updated:	June 2022
Review:	June 2024
Version:	6.2
Reference:	HIC/LFT/727/08