



Grommets

Patient information Leaflet

June 2020

Grommets and why are they used

Some people get fluid behind the eardrum. This is sometimes called 'glue ear'. It is very common in young children, but it can happen in adults too.

Most young children will have glue ear at some time, but it doesn't always cause problems. Glue ear only needs to be treated if it is causing significant hearing loss in both ears (NICE guidance). If your child's hearing loss is less severe or your child is having repeated middle ear infections without hearing loss, funding approval will need to be sought prior to being able to proceed with the operation.

Grommets are very small plastic tubes, which sit in a hole in the eardrum. They let air get in and out of the ear.

The grommet usually stays in place for several months and then falls out of the ear. Occasionally, the grommet has to be removed surgically. In a small number of patients the grommet has to be put back in at a later date.

After the operation Children are kept on the ward for 4 hours of observation following surgery. During this time we will monitor your child and providing they are tolerating drink and food and have passed urine they will then be able to go home.

Care at home

Every operation carries some risk of infection and bleeding, but as the hole in the eardrum is tiny, this risk is very small, and rarely more than a few drops of blood are seen. Around 1-5 in a 100 people develop a perforated (hole) ear drum. If this doesn't heal, it can be repaired later.

Pain mangement following grommet insertion is not usually necessary but you can give your child paracetamol as required. Follow the instructions.

Your child should be able to go back to **school or nursery** the day after the operation.

- **When you wash your child's hair**, it is a good idea to put a small ball of cotton wool in the ear canal (don't pack it or force it in). Place Vaseline over to cover this and provide a waterproof seal. You'll need to do this for the first 2-3 weeks after insertion but the ear should be fine following this. Your child should do the same for **swimming**. When swimming, avoid diving into the water, as the

pressure created can dislodge the grommets. If pain or discharge is experienced either with hair washing or swimming, go back to using the above ear plugs. Some parents have earplugs made, if their child is a very keen swimmer (to use until the grommets have come out), or use special headbands and ear putty to stop water getting in.

- Grommets should improve your child's hearing straight away. Some children feel that everything is very loud – this will settle as they get used to it over the coming days.
- Your child may have a discharge from the ear. If this doesn't improve after two days, contact your GP.
- Your child may have popping or clicking noises in their ear. This is not harmful and will resolve.
- Do not attempt to clean their ear by poking anything down inside.
- It is safe to travel by air when grommets are in place.
- Some children need ear drops at home. Your nurse will advise you if this is necessary for your child.
- Grommets usually fall out by themselves anytime from two months to two years after insertion. The average time is nine months.
- The grommet can leave some scarring in the eardrum. This does not affect your child's hearing.

Children have a hearing assessment following grommet insertion. This appointment will come through the post.

If you have any concerns or require advice go to your GP or contact the Children's ward on 0161 922 5252.

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

If you require an interpreter, please ask an appropriate person to contact our central booking office between Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm on 0161 922 6991 to arrange this for you.

語言 翻譯及病者支持服務 (LIPS):

如果閣下需要翻譯員在您的預約當日幫助您的話 請找一名合適的家庭成員 0161 922 6991 聯絡本中央預約辦事處來您您安排 我們的辦公時間是星期一至星期五 上午 8 時至下午 5 時

Językowo Tłumaczeniowa Usługa Pomocy dla Pacjenta (Language, Interpretation and Patient Support Service LIPS):

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy tłumacza w trakcie swojej wizyty, proszę poprosić odpowiedniego członka rodziny o skontaktowanie się z Centralnym Biurem Zamówień (Central Booking Office), w celu zorganizowania tłumacza pomiędzy poniedziałkiem a piątkiem w godzinach od 08:00 - 17:00 pod numerem 0161 922 6991.

لینگوئج، انٹریپریٹیشن اینڈ پیسینٹ سپورٹ سروس (Lips)

اگر آپ کو اپنی اپائنٹمنٹ کے لئے مترجم کی مدد کی ضرورت ہو تو براہ مہربانی اپنے خاندان کے کسی موزوں فرد سے کہیں کہ وہ ہمارے سنٹرل بکنگ آفس سے پیر سے جمعہ 8.00 بجے صبح سے 5.00 بجے شام کے دوران 0161 922 6991 پر فون کر کے اس کا بندوبست کریں۔

References:

<https://www.entuk.org/grommets>

<https://www.nice.org.uk/>

Author: Lorna Watson
Division/Department: Women and Childrens
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