



Grommet aftercare

Your child has been fitted with grommets to treat glue ear or persistent ear infections. Your child has had a post-operative follow up appointment with a normal audiogram and has now been discharged from the ENT / Paediatric Audiology follow-up clinic. This leaflet gives advice on aftercare. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor or clinic nurse.

Swimming

Children with grommets are allowed to swim without earplugs but are advised against diving under water without any protection. This doesn't necessarily need to be ear plugs; a neoprene headband can also be used. These are available to buy from sports shops or online. However, if they do develop an ear infection after swimming, they should consider using earplugs or stop swimming. When washing hair, prevent bath water getting into the ears with cotton wool smeared in Vaseline.

Discharging ear

If your child develops a discharging ear, but is otherwise well, please visit your GP who will treat with antibiotic drops, such as Ciprofloxacin/Dexamethasone combination drops. Giving the drops involves squirting them into the ear canal and then pumping the ear for 20 seconds to allow the drops to circulate and then pass through the grommet to where they need to be. After 20 seconds, you can empty the excess drops still remaining in the ear canal onto a tissue. In addition, you may need to get a course of oral antibiotics from your GP if your child has a temperature or is generally unwell.

Referral back to ENT

If your child continues to get a discharge from the ear or has other problems, you will need to take your child to the GP, who may refer them back to ENT outpatients.

If you feel that your child's hearing is getting worse despite the grommets, again visit the GP who may refer them back to the Paediatric ENT clinic.

Most grommets come out by themselves after about 9-12 months. You should ensure that you undertake annual visits to see your GP who can check the status of your child's grommets and whether or not they are still in place. If the grommets have come out and your child's eardrums have healed without further problems, then there is no further need to worry about their ears or water precautions. However, 2% (1 in 50 cases) of all ear drums that have grommets, fail to heal, leaving a perforation (small hole). It is important for your GP to rule this out or confirm that this has indeed happened, in which case your child will be referred back to ENT.

In a small number of children, grommets may not come out by themselves within 3 years. If this is the case, your child may need a further brief procedure to remove the grommets.

Contacting us

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To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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