Ear Drainage with Ear Tubes

Your child had ear tubes placed to prevent fluid build-up behind the eardrum. If your child gets an ear infection, you may notice ear drainage in the ear canal, dripping out of the ear, or crusted around the ear opening. Ear drops are usually enough to treat the drainage/infection because the medicine can be given right through the ear tube. Often no oral antibiotics will be needed.

**How to Clean the Ears:**

- Wash your hands with soap and water. Tell your child what you will be doing.
- Remove all ear drainage from the cheek/face with either soap and water or a mixture of one part hydrogen peroxide to one part water.
- Clean the outer ear with a piece of rolled clean tissue or paper towel or cotton swab with the cotton tip twirled away from the stick. Remove as much of the drainage as you can to allow the medication to get into the ear and ear canal.

**How to Use Ear Drops:**

- Wash your hands with soap and water. Tell your child what you are going to do.
- Read the label on the bottle for directions:
  - How many drops to give.
  - How many times per day to use the drops.
- Give the drops into the draining ear.
- Warm the medicine (for your child’s comfort) by rubbing the bottle between your hands for a few minutes or placing the bottle in warm (NOT HOT) water.
- Have your child lie down on his side.
- The medicine bottle tip or the dropper should not touch anything.
- Hold the bottle above the ear and straighten your child’s ear canal by pulling out ear back.
- Squeeze the bottle or dropper above (not touching) your child’s ear.
- Release the right number of drops into your child’s ear.
- Keep your child lying on his side with his ear up for at least one minute.
- Gently press on the area in front of the ear several times to help the drops soak down deep into the ear canal.
- Place a cotton ball at the ear canal opening. Do not push the cotton ball down into the ear canal.
- Remove the cotton ball after 4-5 minutes and wipe off medicine that may have spilled on the outer ear or on your child's face.
- Wash your hands again.

**Call your child's doctor or the Children's Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if:**

- Your child complains of ear pain with the drops.
- Your child's ear drainage is not controlled or does not stop after treating for 7 days with the ear drops.

**Remember:**

- Do not use your child's ear drops for any other person.
- Throw the bottle away when it has passed its expiration date.
- Store ear medicine away from heat and direct light.