

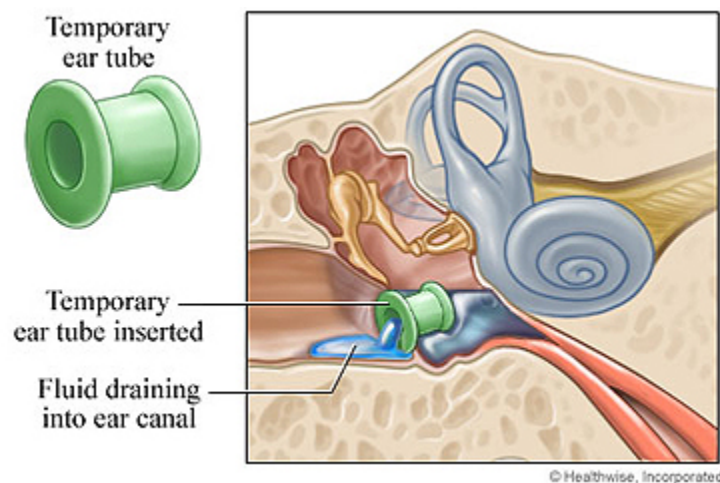


# CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

## Learning About Ear Tube Placement

### What is ear tube placement?



Ear tubes are used to treat frequent ear infections, usually in young children. A tube can be placed in one or both ears. It is one of the most common childhood operations.

Ear tubes are made of hollow plastic and are shaped like a very small spool of thread. The doctor makes a small hole in the eardrum, and then puts an ear tube through the hole. Children who have ear infections usually have fluid buildup behind the eardrum. This causes pain and can also cause hearing loss. The ear tubes allow fluid to drain from the inside of the ear. This reduces pressure, relieves pain, and restores hearing. Allowing the fluid to drain also prevents the growth of bacteria that cause ear infections.

Doctors consider putting in ear tubes when a child has fluid buildup in the ears for 3 to 4 months and has some hearing loss.

## How is ear tube placement done?

Ear tube placement is done by an ear, nose, and throat doctor (otolaryngologist) in a hospital or clinic.

Your child will be asleep during the surgery. The doctor will make a small cut in the eardrum. He or she will use a small suction tool to gently remove any fluid that drains into the ear canal. Then the doctor will insert the ear tube through the hole made in the eardrum.

## What can you expect after ear tube placement?

Children can usually go home within 1 to 2 hours after the surgery. They usually have little pain after the operation. Your child will probably be able to return to school or day care the next day.

Your child will not have any visible scars from the surgery.

The tubes usually stay in for 6 to 12 months and fall out on their own as the child grows.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter Y747 in the search box to learn more about "**Learning About Ear Tube Placement**".

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