



DALLAS
ENT
GROUP

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Information About Pressure Equalization (PE) Tubes and Draining Ears

- Spotting an active ear infection with PE tubes:
 - 25% to 30% of patient's develop drainage from the ear at some point while PE tubes are in place.
 - If an infection develops, drainage will be visible on the outside portion of the ear. This drainage will usually be a creamy or milky consistency, but may be blood-tinged or bloody.
 - Infrequent drainage is not abnormal with tube placement.
 - Seeing blood on the ear should not cause alarm, but is just an indication of infection and irritation of the inside of the ear.
 - If you notice an ear infection, call our office ask to speak with the medical assistant. Depending on the specific situation, ear drops or oral antibiotics may be prescribed, and/or we will schedule an office visit.
- Long-term expectancy of PE tubes:
 - The PE tubes generally remain in place for 12 to 18 months and usually extrude (come out) on their own and the holes where the PE tubes sat will heal up within about 3 months.
 - 5% of patients will have holes in the eardrum that do not heal after the tube comes out.
 - In this situation, the holes will need to be grafted by the ENT by placing a patch over the holes to manually close it.
 - If the tubes do not extrude on their own, it may be recommended that the ENT manually remove them around the 3 year mark.
 - If this is done, there is a small chance that the holes where the PE tubes sat will not close on their own and the eardrums will have to be grafted. In this situation, the ENT will place a patch over the holes to manually close it.

*****Water Protection*****

It is highly recommended to keep water out of the ears while PE tubes are in place. This includes avoidance of bath water, swimming pool, river, and lake water. If water enters the ear, there is a risk of the water going through the tube and into the middle ear space. This will cause mild to severe pain. Water of any kind may contain contaminants, which can cause an infection if it enters the tube.

For those that cannot avoid water, swimplugs are highly recommended for every interaction with water. Please do not hesitate to call our office if you have any questions!