

**Patient  
Information**

# Myringotomy and grommets

## Introduction

This leaflet provides information about the operation your child is going to have, its benefit, what to expect when you are at the hospital and information to enable your child to receive a safe general anaesthetic.

## What is a myringotomy?

A myringotomy is a small cut in the ear drum which allows secretions to be drained from the middle ear.

## What are grommets?

A grommet is a very small hollow tube which is inserted into the ear drum to allow air into the middle ear.

## Benefits

The benefit of the operation is that there should be improved hearing while the grommet remains in position.

## Before the operation

These operations are usually carried out under a general anaesthetic (while your child is asleep). Breast fed babies may feed up to 4 hours before the surgery. However, formula bottle fed babies may only feed up to 6 hours before the surgery.

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**GHPI0274\_04\_22**

Department

**Paediatrics/ENT**

Review due

**April 2025**

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## Fasting before surgery

Before having a general anaesthetic, it is important that your child's stomach is empty, so please make sure that the guidelines below are followed:

### If your child's surgery is in the morning:

- Your child can eat and drink normally until 12:00 midnight the day before surgery
- From 12:00 midnight until 7:00 am your child may only have a drink of water, or weak squash only. No fruit juices or fizzy drinks
- If your child is on formula milk feeds, they can have one just before 3:00 am
- If your child is being breast fed you may allow a feed up until 5:00 am – this does not apply to formula milk
- After 7:00 am your child must not eat or drink anything at all
- If your child is on medication, please make sure this is given before 7:00 am, unless you have been instructed otherwise

### If your child's surgery is in the afternoon:

- Your child may have a light breakfast, such as toast or cereal and a drink before 7:30 am
- Between 7:30 am and 12:00 midday your child may drink of water, or weak squash only. No fruit juices or fizzy drinks
- If your child is on formula milk feeds, they can have a last feed before 7.30 am
- If your child is being breast fed you may allow a feed up until 10:00 am – this does not apply to formula milk
- After 12:00 midday your child must not eat or drink anything at all
- If your child is on medication, please make sure this is given before 12:00 midday, unless instructed otherwise

**Patient  
Information****Items to bring into hospital**

- Any medicines, tablets or inhalers that your child is currently taking
- A favourite toy or comforter
- Details about any special food or dietary requirements
- If you are staying with your child overnight, please bring nightwear, a towel, toothbrush and toothpaste for both of you

Please bring in the above items even if your child is booked for day case surgery as this may change.

**Following the operation**

After your child's operation they may start to eat and drink as soon as they are awake.

**Risks**

- Discharge from the ear
- Persistent perforation, 1 in 50 patients experience this after the grommet falls out or is removed.

**Medication**

Your child may experience slight discomfort or sickness after the operation. They will be offered medicines which will help with any discomfort.

Once at home, you may need to give your child pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen to keep them comfortable.

**Leaving hospital**

Your child will be allowed to go home if they have minimal or no pain, their temperature is normal and they do not feel sick.

Most children will go home the same day as the operation.

After the operation there may be some bleeding or discharge from the ear, this should stop within 3 to 4 days.

If the discharge has not stopped after this time, or you think that it looks or smells unpleasant, please contact your GP for advice. Ear drops may be needed. Your GP may ask the ENT team to review your child.

## Patient Information

It is important to keep the ear protected by using a piece of cotton wool smeared with Vaseline<sup>®</sup> while washing your child's hair or when the ear is in contact with soapy water.

It is safe to travel by air with grommets in place.

Once at home, if you have any concerns about your child's operation or recovery during the first night after surgery, please contact the Paediatric Assessment Unit. After this time, you should contact your child's GP for advice.

## Play and school

Your child can continue to play but should not overdo things. They should rest when they feel tired.

Time off before going back to school should be assessed on an individual basis, however it is typical to need 24 to 48 hours recovery at home before returning to normal activities.

## Follow up

Your child's consultant may wish to see you and your child in the ENT outpatient's department after their operation to see how your child is progressing.

Your child's doctor will discuss with you when they can resume water sports. There are products available online to purchase which can aid in protection from water whilst swimming or bathing. Please ask the doctor about the suitability of these.

## Contact information

### Paediatric Day Unit

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 8452

Tel: 0300 422 8453

Monday to Friday, 7:00 am to 7:00 pm

### Paediatric Assessment Unit

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 07798 695 981

Tel: 0300 422 8305

Please contact **NHS 111** for advice if not an emergency.

Tel: 111

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