



Information for
patients and
carers

Myringotomies and Grommets

This leaflet gives you information regarding “glue ear” and the surgery required.

What is Glue Ear?

‘Glue ear’ is diagnosed when sticky fluid (glue) builds up inside the ear due to failure of ventilation by the Eustachian tube (the drain pipe). Normally this tube allows drainage into the throat. If the tube is blocked the pressure behind the ear drum drops and fluid builds up. As fluid builds up in the airspace, sound waves cannot vibrate the eardrum normally and a degree of deafness occurs.

A cold fluid can build up and cause some deafness, but the fluid usually drains. Children may also have balance problems.

Treating glue ear with grommets improves hearing while the grommets are still in. Speech and language can then catch up. Your child will have hearing tests (audiology) performed to help with the diagnosis.

Reasons why children can get ‘Glue Ear’?

- The Eustachian tube is much smaller than in adults and blocks easily with colds and ear infections
- As the skull grows the muscles opening the tube work better
- Large adenoids reduce the tube functioning
- Children tend to have more colds and infections than adults
- Parents who smoke are more likely to have children with glue ear as passive smoking affects the Eustachian tube

Treatment

- Antibiotics to clear infections
- A Myringotomy – making a small hole in the ear drum and removal of the glue by suction
- Insertion of grommets into the ear drum
- Removal of adenoids

What is a Grommet?

- A tiny tube like a small cotton reel
- It is inserted in a small cut into the ear drum (myringotomy)
- It lasts for an average of six to eight months but can be longer

How do they work?

They improve the drainage of the fluid internally and allow air behind the ear drum and so improve the hearing. The grommet is pushed out into the ear canal as the drum heals and will normally fall out itself. They may also be used to treat repeat ear infections.

The risks of Grommet Surgery

This surgery is very safe and problems are unlikely to occur. If the 'glue ear' returns grommets may need to be replaced. With repeated grommet insertion scarring of the ear drum can occur and there is a small risk the ear drum may not heal where the grommet is inserted. Very rarely the grommets may need to be removed if repeated infections occur.

Care at home following a myringotomy

- Keep ears dry for one week
- Use cotton wool and Vaseline plugs when bathing and washing hair
- No swimming for one week
- Return to school the next day if fully recovered from anaesthetic

Care at home following grommet surgery

- Keep ears dry when bathing and washing hair
- No swimming for four weeks and then no diving
- Give painkillers as required, the nurse will explain what painkillers and when
- Return to school the next day if recovered from anaesthetic
- A slight ooze or bleed from the ear 1 – 2 days following the operation is normal. Just clean the outer ear but do not attempt to clean inside the ear
- If a discharge from the ear becomes worse or your child has severe pain you can contact the ward if within one week or speak to your GP thereafter

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Children's Day Case **01772 524913** or **07783848196**

Children's Assessment Unit: **01772 523632**

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

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If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad
Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages

Cantonese:

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

Gujarati:

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઇચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

Hungarian:

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

Polish:

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

Urdu:

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

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