



## **POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR MYRINGOTOMY & GROMMET INSERTION SURGERY**

Middle ear infection or *otitis media* is a common childhood condition. When the ear infection is recurrent or long-standing, fluid can accumulate in the middle ear; this fluid stops the tiny bones in the middle ear from moving properly, resulting in hearing loss.

*Grommets* or *ventilation tubes* are tiny tubes that are placed in the eardrum to allow ventilation of the middle ear. A tiny cut is made in the eardrum (the cut is called *myringotomy*) and the grommet is inserted into the hole. If there is fluid or 'glue' in the middle ear, the surgeon will use suction to take some of this out. A short-term grommet, the most common, will remain in the ear for around 9 months, although this can vary widely from 3-24 months. Long-term grommets are larger and have flanges that secure them in place for a longer period. They eventually drop out of the ear with wax and in most cases the eardrum will close on its own.

The surgery itself is very quick and your child will be able to go home on the day of surgery. Recovering is usually uneventful; earache may be expected for the first 24-48 hours, Panadol or Painstop will be sufficient to relieve this. There may be a small amount of discharge from the ears after the operation, but if this continues beyond 5 days you should contact the surgeon. Sometimes eardrops may be prescribed by your surgeon to prevent this discharge.

After grommet surgery it is essential that the ears are kept completely dry. Cotton wool with Vaseline smeared into it may be put into the ears for hair washing, bathing, and showering. There are various earplugs, ear wraps & custom made ear plugs that may be purchased from the Audiologist at the ENT rooms for use when swimming but it is important to note that these will not provide enough protection during diving or swimming deeper than 1 metre. If water should go into the ears, do not panic, but watch for any discharge from the ears over the next few days. If ear discharge occurs, please contact your GP or surgeon.

After grommet surgery the first follow up appointment will be in 4 weeks with our Audiologist to check hearing and to assess the grommets. Your child will require intermittent follow up appointments with the ENT surgeon until the grommets have been extruded (come out) and the eardrum is seen to have recovered. Usually a post-operative hearing test will be required – the surgeon will arrange this in due course.