

Tympanoplasty

How to prepare and what to expect

This handout explains tympanoplasty, surgery to repair the parts of the ear. It describes what to expect, how to prepare for your operation, and how to plan for your recovery.

What is tympanoplasty?

Tympanoplasty is surgery to repair the eardrum (*tympanic membrane*) or small hearing bones (*ossicles*) in the middle ear. They may be repaired using either man-made material or natural tissues. The purpose of this surgery is to restore your hearing.



Tympanoplasty is surgery to repair parts of the middle ear.

How to Prepare

- **Starting 1 week before surgery:** Do **not** take any aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting. Two of these are ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). See the attached sheet for more information.
- **Starting 48 hours before your surgery:** Do **not** use a razor to shave any part of your body. We want to avoid skin cuts on the day of surgery.
- During your **pre-op visit**, the nurse will tell you:
 - Not to eat or drink after certain time
 - Which of your regular medicines to take or not take
 - To sip only enough water to swallow your pills

Day Before Surgery

- **Shower:** Take a shower the night before your surgery:
 - Use the antibacterial soap your nurse gave you to wash your body.
 - Do not use the antibacterial soap on your face or hair. (See the directions that came with the soap.) Use your own soap and shampoo on your face and hair.
 - Use clean towels to dry off, and put on clean clothes.
- **Arrival time:** A surgery patient-care coordinator (PCC) will call you by 5 p.m. the day before your surgery. If you are having surgery on a Monday, the PCC will call you the Friday before. If you do not receive this call by 5 p.m., please call **206.598.6541**.



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copy of this handout.*

Day of Surgery

At Home

- **Fast:** Follow the nurse's instructions about not eating and drinking.
- **Shower:** Take another shower with antibacterial soap. Follow the same steps as the night before.
- **Medicines:** Follow the instructions the nurse gave you about which medicines to take or not take. Remember to sip only enough water to swallow your pills.

Ride Home

This is outpatient surgery. Most patients do not stay overnight in the hospital.

You will need a responsible adult to take you home from the hospital. This person may drive you, or take a bus, taxi, shuttle or other transportation with you. **You cannot travel by yourself.**

What to Expect After Your Operation

Dressing

- You will have packing in your ear canal after your surgery. **Do NOT remove this packing.** Your doctor will remove it at your next clinic visit.
- There will also be an outer dressing or a cotton ball over your canal opening, covered by a Band-aid. Keep this dressing in place for 2 days.
 - The outer dressing will be held in place with a strap. You may adjust the strap for better comfort.
 - If the outside of the dressing becomes bloody, you may return to clinic for a dressing change.
- Keep your ear dry until your doctor tells you it is OK to get it wet.

Pain Medicine

- **For mild to moderate pain:** Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). Follow the dose instructions on the label. Alternate taking Tylenol and ibuprofen every 3 to 4 hours.
- **For severe pain:** Take the pain medicine (opioids) your doctor prescribed. Take only as prescribed.

Self-care at Home

For Your Safety

The general anesthesia you had for surgery will affect your ability to think and do usual activities. For 24 hours after your surgery, do **NOT**:

- Drive or use machinery
- Drink alcohol
- Travel alone
- Sign any legal papers
- Be responsible for children, pets, or an adult who needs care

Activity

- For 4 weeks after your procedure, do **not**:
 - Blow your nose
 - Swim or dive
- If you have to sneeze, do so **with your mouth open** to reduce pressure in your ears.

Return to Work

Most people take 1 week off work to recover. Your doctor will let you know if you need to take more time off.

Altitude Changes

- Do **not** fly for 1 month after your procedure.
- It is OK to use elevators.

Follow-up Visits

- You will need a follow-up visit 1 week to a month after surgery to check your wound. Ask your surgeon when to schedule this follow-up visit.
- You will have a hearing test 6 to 8 weeks after your surgery.

Your appointments are:

When to Call

Call the clinic nurse or doctor on call if you have:

- Increased redness, swelling, pain, or drainage from your ear
- Fever higher than 101.5°F (38.6°C)
- Bleeding from your ear
- Nausea or vomiting that will not stop

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

To set up a clinic visit, or if you have questions about your treatment plan, call the Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery Center at 206.598.4022 and press 2.