

# Grommet Insertion (adult)

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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## What is glue ear?

Glue ear is a common condition where fluid collects in your middle ear behind your eardrum. It can cause deafness and repeated earache or infections, sometimes resulting in a discharge from your ear.

Your surgeon has suggested placing a grommet (small plastic or metal tube) to treat your glue ear.

## How does glue ear happen?

The eustachian tube connects your middle ear with the back of your nose. Sometimes this tube does not work properly. This causes fluid to build up in your middle ear. This collection of fluid is called glue ear.

## What are the benefits of surgery?

The grommet ventilates your middle ear, allowing air to enter it. This prevents fluid build-up and the resulting deafness.

## Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Many people with glue ear do not need surgery. The condition almost always gets better but it is not always possible to say when this will happen.

Another treatment is to wear a hearing aid until hearing improves.

## What does the operation involve?

The operation is usually performed under a general anaesthetic but a local anaesthetic can be used. The operation usually takes about 20 minutes.

Your surgeon will make a small hole in your eardrum and remove the fluid by suction. They will place a plastic or metal grommet in the hole.

## How can I prepare myself for the operation?

If you smoke, stopping smoking now may reduce your risk of developing complications and will improve your long-term health.

Try to maintain a healthy weight. You have a higher risk of developing complications if you are overweight.

Regular exercise should help to prepare you for the operation, help you to recover and improve your long-term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Speak to the healthcare team about any vaccinations you might need to reduce your risk of serious illness while you recover. When you come into hospital, practise social distancing and hand washing and wear a face covering when asked.

## What complications can happen?

### General complications of any operation

- Bleeding
- Blood clot in your leg
- Blood clot in your lung
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Chest infection

### Specific complications of this operation

- Leaking from your ear of clear fluid or fluid mixed with blood for 1 to 2 days
- Ear discharge lasting longer than 1 to 2 days
- Small hole left in the eardrum
- Repeated build-up of fluid in your middle ear

### Consequences of this procedure

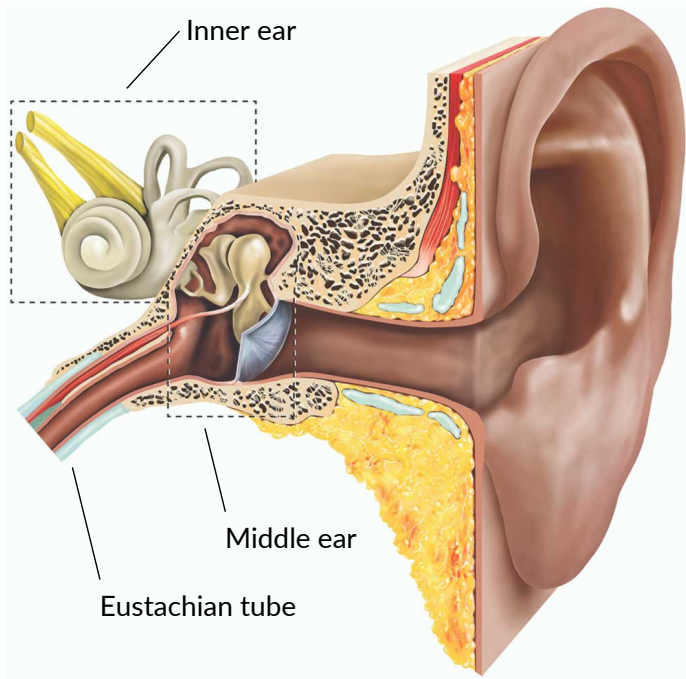
- Pain

## How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day.

Do not swim for 6 weeks and then do not dive deeper than 2 metres. Other than swimming, you should be able to return to normal activities after 1 to 2 days.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.



Blocking of the eustachian tube causes glue ear

The grommet will fall out of your ear by itself, after 6 to 18 months, depending on the material and design of the grommet.

### Illustrator

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## Summary

Glue ear is a common condition that usually gets better without any surgery. Surgery is recommended when the condition lasts longer than 3 months and the hearing loss is causing problems.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

## Acknowledgements

### Reviewer

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