

Tubes for Ear Infections

The eustachian tube is a small tube that connects the middle ear to your throat. Its job is to drain fluid from the middle ear to the throat.

A cold can cause the tube to swell and keep the fluid from draining like it should.

This is most often a problem for young children because their tubes are smaller and don't drain as well.

When the eustachian tube doesn't drain, the middle ear fills with fluid.

And that's the perfect place for viruses and bacteria to grow and cause a painful ear infection.

It can also make it harder to hear.

Temporary ear tubes can help this problem by giving the fluid another way to drain.

Placing ear tubes is a common surgery, and your child usually goes home the same day.

Here's how it's done ...

A small cut is made in the eardrum.

This lets the fluid drain from the middle ear into the ear canal, where it's suctioned out by the doctor.

A temporary ear tube is then inserted into the cut in the ear.

While the ear tube is in place, it helps to drain fluid and improve hearing.

Ear tubes usually stay in place for 6 to 12 months and then fall out on their own.