

Adult Grommet Surgery

What is grommet surgery?

A grommet is a small, plastic tube that sits in the eardrum. It allows air to pass in and out of the ear. This helps to stop the production of fluid that causes glue ear.

Why do I need this operation?

Grommets are often inserted for a condition called glue ear. Glue ear is when there is fluid behind the ear drum. It commonly occurs in children but does occur in adults too. This doesn't always need treating and can clear up by itself. Sometimes glue ear can cause hearing problems or repeated ear infections. If glue ear is causing problems, grommet surgery may be recommended. There are also other conditions where grommet surgery may be recommended which your doctor will discuss with you.

How long does a grommet stay in for?

Grommets fall out by themselves and do not need to be removed. It varies from person to person but they usually fall out after 6-18 months.

What can I expect before the operation?

Before the day of your operation you will be seen at pre-assessment clinic. You will also be screened for MRSA with swabs from your throat/nose/armpit or groin. If you have other medical problems, you might also have an appointment arranged for you with an anaesthetist (the doctor that puts you to sleep for the operation).

Will I need to fast before the operation?

You will be asked to stop eating six hours before coming into hospital and not to drink anything other than clear fluids up to two hours before coming into hospital. Clear fluids are water, black tea and black coffee.

What happens on the day of my operation?

On the day of surgery you will be admitted to a ward where nursing staff will go through some paper work with you. You will be seen by a member of the surgical team. They will go through the operation and consent form with you.

You will also be seen by an anaesthetist who will discuss how you will be put to sleep and answer any questions you may have about this.

After your operation, you will come back to the ward to recover. After a few hours, once you have fully recovered, you will be able to go home.

What does the operation involve?

Grommet surgery is usually performed under a general anaesthetic where you will be asleep but it can be done awake with a local anaesthetic too. A small opening is made in the ear drum which allows the grommet to be inserted.

The operation is performed down the ear canal, using a microscope. There will be no cuts or scars to see on the outside of the ear.

Grommets are usually a day case procedure, meaning you will go home the same day.

What are the risks of surgery?

Any operation will have some risks, however most people recover very well from grommet surgery.

Risks include:

Bleeding

Pain

Infection with discharge coming from the ear

Persistent hole in the ear drum after the grommet has fallen out

Your doctor will discuss the risks of the surgery with you on the day of operation and any specific risks in your particular case.

What can I expect after the operation?

1. Grommet surgery is usually well tolerated. You may need to use simple painkillers such as paracetamol in the first day or two.
2. You may get a small amount of clear discharge the first day or two after the surgery.
3. You may be prescribed ear drops to use but your doctor will tell you if these are needed.
4. You need to keep the ear canal dry. When washing your hair you should use a cotton wool ball covered in Vaseline to prevent water getting into your ear.
5. You should avoid swimming for the first two to four weeks after surgery.

How long will I be off work?

If you have a general anaesthetic you will need one day off work. If you have the procedure done under local anaesthetic you can return to work the next day.

What about follow up?

You will receive a letter with your follow up appointment in the post. Typically this is six to eight weeks after the operation but can vary.

Contact Information

The Princess Royal Hospital (Ansty Ward) 01444 441881 Ext. 8240

Mr. Watts's secretary 01273 696955 Ext. 4821

Mr. McGilligan's secretary 01273 696955 Ext. 7698

Mr. O'Connell's secretary 01273 696955 Ext. 4802

Mr. Harries' secretary 01273 696955 Ext. 4802

Mr. Saunders's secretary 01273 696955 Ext. 4821

Mr. Das's secretary 01444 441881 Ext. 8372

Mr. Pelsler's secretary 01273 696955 Ext. 4812

Mr. Lew-Gor's secretary 01273 696955 Ext. 4812

Mr. Weighill's secretary 01273 696955 Ext. 4812

Mr. Desai's secretary 01273 696955 Ext. 7698

Appointment booking centre 0300 303 8360

If you have vision, mobility or access issues please contact the Hickstead Pre-operative Assessment Unit on **01444 441881 Ext. 5963** for further advice/information

Further Reading

https://entuk.org/ent_patients/ear_conditions

<http://patient.info/health/operations-for-glue-ear>

If you require this document in a language other than English please inform your interpreter or a member of staff.

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