



Spire Children and Young
People's Service

Patient information

Paediatric Grommets

This leaflet provides some standard information and advice about having grommets (ventilation tubes) inserted. However, you should always follow the instructions of your child's consultant.

If you have any unanswered questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask your child's consultant or nurse for more information. It is natural to feel anxious, but knowing what to expect can often help.

The information contained in this leaflet is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice nor is it intended to be for medical diagnosis or treatment.

	Children's Ward: 0161 447 6914
	Out of Hours: 0161 447 6677
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Spire

Manchester Hospital

What's the operation for?

Your child will have been suffering from 'glue ear', a build-up of sticky fluid in the ear, or repeated ear infections. Glue ear stops the eardrum letting sound through properly and the sound heard is dampened down.

A grommet is a tiny plastic tube shaped like a cotton reel. It has a barrel with a hole through it to allow air into the space (middle ear) behind the eardrum and a cuff on each end to hold it in place. During this operation, the surgeon will drain the fluid that has built up in the middle ear and position a grommet in the eardrum (tympanic membrane). Having grommets inserted can help children with glue ear to hear better and can reduce the number of ear infections that a child suffers.

Grommet insertion is routinely performed under a general anaesthetic, which means your child will be asleep throughout and not feel any pain. Occasionally, older adolescents have grommets inserted under local anaesthesia. The operation is usually carried out as a day case, with no overnight stay in hospital.

Preparing for the operation

You will have received information about how to prepare your child for their operation in your admission letter. It is a good idea for your child to bring any favourite toys with them and some pyjamas/night wear to wear to theatre.

When you arrive at the hospital, a nurse will explain how your child will be cared for during their stay and do some simple tests, such as checking their pulse and temperature.

About the operation

You will be encouraged to stay with your child as far as the anaesthetic room, once they are asleep the nurse will escort you back to your room.

Once your child is asleep, the surgeon will look at the eardrum through a microscope. A tiny cut (about 2mm) is made in the eardrum, and a fine sucker is used to draw out the fluid. Sometimes ear drops containing an antibiotic (may also contain steroid) are put into the ear canal at the end of the procedure to help prevent infection.

After the operation

Your child will be taken from the operating theatre to the recovery room, where they will wake-up from the anaesthetic under close supervision. Once your child has woken, the nurse will escort you to collect them and return to the room on the ward.

Once on the ward, the nurse will make your child comfortable and monitor them. Your child will need to rest on the bed or on your lap until the effects of the anaesthetic have passed.

The consultant will come to see your child and discuss any findings from the operation and follow-up care. Once your child has recovered, eaten, drank and passed urine they will be able to go home.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the paediatric team on 0161 447 6914 or main reception on 0161 447 6677.

Spire Manchester Hospital does not have an accident and emergency department therefore if your concerns are of a serious nature please seek immediate medical attention from your local accident and emergency department.

Looking after your child at home

Your child may have earache but often there is no pain. There may also be a little blood-stained leakage from the ear. This is usually the antibiotic drops with a little blood staining from the small cut made in the ear drum. Occasionally children notice a popping or clicking in the ears but this is not harmful, and again results from having fluid against the eardrum.

Contact the hospital if your child develops any of the following symptoms:

- Your child develops a fever
- Your child is in a lot of pain and pain relief does not seem to help
- If there is persistent, sticky discharge or persistent bleeding from the ear