

# Keeping Water Out Of The Ear

## *Ventilation Tubes (Grommets)*

When a child has ventilation tubes (Grommets) in the eardrum it is important to keep soapy and dirty water out of the ear. The worst water is bath water or while washing the hair. Soap and shampoo destroy the surface tension of the water and allow the water to pass through the small hole in the tube into the middle ear. Soap and shampoo can also carry large numbers of bacteria from the scalp or body into the ear canal and middle ear.

Blu-Tack, silicone gel, or ear plugs can be used to keep water out of the ears.

If children have ventilation tubes (Grommets) in their ears it is generally thought to be safe to swim in lakes and the sea without ear protection provided the water is clean. Diving below the surface is not allowed as this may force water into the middle ear causing an infection.

## *Perforated Eardrum*

Eardrum perforations are often large holes that allow water into the middle ear with ease. Keeping water out of the ear is very important in preventing infection and helping the perforation to heal.



Blu-Tack should be rubbed between the fingers to soften it before use. Silicon gel is softer and easier to use but is more expensive.

Don't dive below the surface or this may force the Blu-Tack, gel, or plugs deep into the ear canal. A bathing cap helps to keep the plug in as well as giving further protection against water.

For showering and hair washing another alternative is to use thin plastic or Gladwrap around the ear only to keep water out.