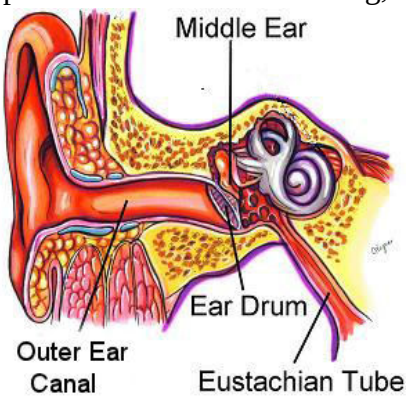
Ear Drum Perforation

A ruptured ear drum can be caused by infection or injury. Injury may result from a loud noise, foreign objects in the ears, inserting cotton-tipped swabs, trauma such as a hard slap, or changes in pressure such as scuba diving, flying, or driving in the mountains. Symptoms can include hearing loss, pain, ringing in the ears and discharge or bleeding from the ear. More serious ear drum injuries may cause dizziness, vomiting, or even facial paralysis. You should see your caregiver right away if you have these more serious symptoms.



Ruptured ear drums usually heal on their own if the ear is kept dry. Do not go swimming or get wet. Place a cotton ball covered with petroleum jelly in the ear when showering or washing your hair. Antibiotics (oral or ear drops) may be needed to treat or prevent infection. While surgery is rarely required, placement of a small paper patch over the perforation improves the chance that healing will occur if it does not heal on its own. See your caregiver for follow-up as recommended to be sure the ear drum is healing properly.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is bleeding or pus-like *(purulent)* material coming from your ear.
- You have problems with balance, feel dizzy, or feel sick to your stomach *(nausea)* and vomiting.
- You develop increased pain and/or an oral temperature above 100.4° F (38° C) which is not controlled by medications.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Monitor your condition.
- Contact your caregiver if you are getting worse, not improving, or have any other questions or concerns.

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