

**Dr Mark Courtney** MB ChB, FRACS (orl-hns)

**Paediatric and Adult**

**Surgery of the Ear, Nose and Throat, Head and Neck**

ABN: 12258861995

**John Flynn Hospital – Suite 6a, Fred McKay House, 42 Inland Drive, Tugun, QLD 4224**



**FRACS**

Fellow of the  
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

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**Provider number:** 2733814F (John Flynn)

**Rooms:** 07 56302600

**Fax:** 07 56010052

**Provider number:** 273381WL (Robina)

**Provider number:** 2733816B (Ballina)

**Web:** [www.drmarkcourtney.com](http://www.drmarkcourtney.com)

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## **PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET**

### **The question of Grommets and Swimming**

- Following grommet insertion I normally like patients to avoid putting their head under water for four weeks.
- After this initial period there are two approaches that can be taken:-

When swimming or putting ones head under the water you may use earplugs, swimming cap and/or a ‘little grommets’ headband found on the website [www.littlegrommets.com.au](http://www.littlegrommets.com.au) or purchased through the Neurosensory Unit. One option for earplugs is the use of blue tac.

Or alternatively a patient can swim and put ones head under the water without using any earplugs or protection, excluding dirty or stagnant water or soapy water as the latter has a lower viscosity and may more easily pass through the lumen of the grommet.

The ear protective methods may or may not stop water entering the ear canal and creating an infection around the grommet. Minimal evidence exists to suggest they are protective. If an ear infection does happen the use of antibiotic eardrops (Ciloxin 0.3%) will normally clear it. In the presence of a grommet an ear infection is normally noted by a white/coloured discharge.

I am personally comfortable with either approach that one takes when the grommets are insitu. I believe that there are only a minority of children that do get ear infections with/after water exposure and the majority can swim frequently without any ear protection and not have problems.