

Eustachian Tube Dysfunction

What is it?



- **Eustachian Tube**– connects the middle ear to the throat, purpose is to equalize the middle ear pressure with environmental pressure
 - **Ear Pops**- on an airplane is that the Eustachian tube has opened and equalized pressure
 - **Ear Does Not Pop**- involves pain or fullness, may be alleviated by use of special ear plugs; may also be from TMJ (jaw joint) disturbances, Meniere’s disease or a migraine headache
 - **Patulous Eustachian Tube**- when the Eustachian is chronically open causing a man in a barrel sensation when one talks, like an echo
 - **Eustachian Tube Opens and Closes Rhythmically**- causing a clicking noise, usually due to palatal myoclonus

Signs and Symptoms:

- **Symptoms**- ear fullness, clogged ears, ear crackling, ears popping, ear pain

Facts:

- **Causes**- the Eustachian tube changes with age, allergies, be poor for several months after otitis media
- **Other reasons for Ear Fullness**- sudden sensorineural hearing loss, Meniere’s disease, TMJ
- **Ear Wax**- or a piece of hair lying on top of the eardrum and when the eardrum vibrates, the eardrum can make funny noises, treatment is by removal of the hair or wax

What can I do?

- **See your Health Care Provider**- diagnosis from history as fullness in the ears which clears when they pop or swallow
 - **Tympanometry**- method of measuring pressure in the ear
 - **Mild Treatment**- decongestants, antihistamines, nasal topical steroids, nasal spray, irrigation of the nose with salt water
 - **Severe Treatment**- ventilation tube placed in the ear drum

