

DIVING WITH A RUPTURED EARDRUM OR VENTILATION TUBES

Do not dive is the best advice.

Learn what it sounds like when you have a hole in the eardrum. Squeeze your nose and blow air gently into the ears as when equalizing. When one tries to equalize on dry land there will be a thud with a normal intact eardrum.

If there is a big hole, the sound will be like a "whoof".

If the hole is tiny, the sound will be a squeak or squeal.

Do not check the amount of healing by equalizing more than **once** a day in listening for the different sounds. You may create enough pressure to blow the healing cells apart preventing the formation of a new membrane.

So be very careful.

I advise that you do not take chances. It is best to not dive.

Get the opinion of an ear specialist to find out if he agrees with the following directions.

- If you are a die-hard and must dive, try to seal off the ear canal. You can do this with cotton mixed with Vaseline. Use a cotton plug big enough to fill the canal, about 1/2" long x 3/8" thick. More or less depending on the diameter of your canal.
- Sew a thread through the plug and bring the thread to outside of the ear canal so that the cotton plug can be pulled out easily after the dive.
- A Proplug should be placed in the ear to further hold the cotton plug in place. A vented Proplug can be used as the vent will be sealed by the Vaseline.
- A vented Proplug must be used in the normal ear or no plug at all.

The ruptured eardrum must be checked from time to time by a physician to see if it has healed or has become infected. If diving at least once per week, see the doctor every 1 to 2 months. Check more often early on.

It is important to know whether the eardrum is healed or not. If there is no longer any hole, the vented earplug must be used or no plug at all to permit equalization. Blocking the canal completely once healed would be very dangerous for the fragile eardrum. At first, depths must be greatly reduced. Perhaps 10 feet or less because the pressure is already very intense at that seemingly shallow depth. Depth can be increased progressively by small increments. Your dive instructor can tell you how much the baropressure increases per foot of descent. It may be that you can never go as deep as you once could go without further injuring your eardrum.

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