



EUSTACHIAN TUBE DYSFUNCTION

What is Eustachian tube dysfunction?

The Eustachian tubes are structures that connect the ear to the back of the nose and act as pressure equalizing valves for the middle ears. Eustachian tube dysfunction (ETD) is a phenomenon that occurs when the Eustachian tubes are not functioning normally. These passageways are small and can become blocked for several different reasons.

What causes Eustachian tube dysfunction?

The most common causes of Eustachian tube dysfunction are conditions/diseases that lead to inflammation in the back of the nose. Examples of common causes include allergies, the common cold, or sinus infections.

What symptoms are common with Eustachian tube dysfunction?

- Ear pressure or a sensation of ear fullness
- Feeling as if ears are “plugged”
- Changes in hearing
- Hearing a crackling/popping/clicking sound when opening mouth, yawning, or chewing
- Ear pain

How is Eustachian tube dysfunction treated?

We recommend the following for Eustachian tube dysfunction:

- Steroid nasal spray (eg. Flonase/Nasacort) - 2 sprays to each nostril once daily (available OTC)
- Autoinsufflation, as tolerated, 3 times per day to train the Eustachian tubes to open and close more efficiently. We recommend performing this by pinching the nostrils closed and gently blowing against this pressure with the mouth closed.
- Oral antihistamine (eg. Claritin/Allegra/Zyrtec) - 1 pill one time per day (available OTC)
- For severe cases, your provider may recommend a course of oral corticosteroids or a minor procedure involving the ear drum.