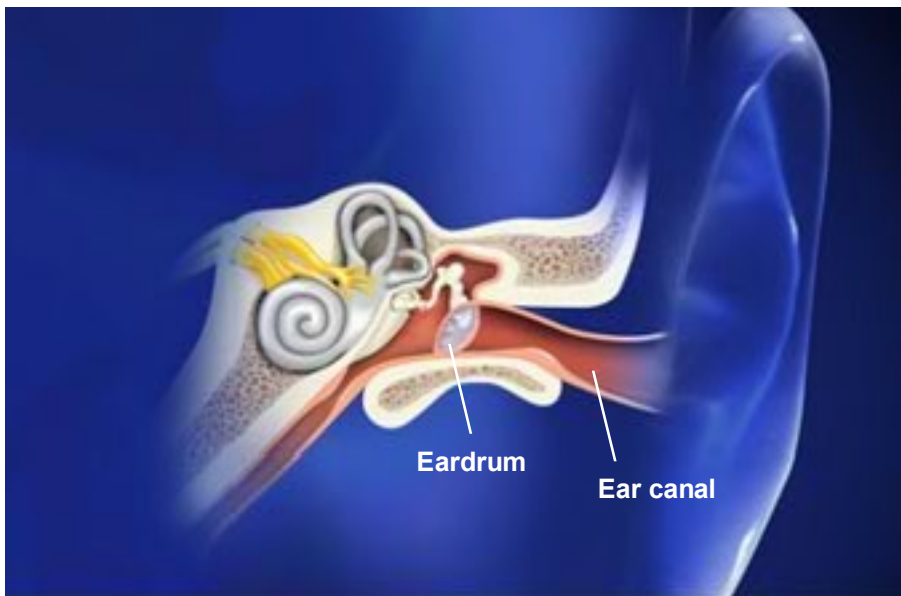


Perforation (or Rupture) of the Eardrum



Overview

This condition is an opening in the tympanic membrane, commonly called the eardrum. In some cases, a hole in the eardrum can lead to reduction or loss of hearing.

Anatomy

The eardrum is a thin membrane that transmits sound waves to the middle ear. The eardrum is normally sealed tightly across the ear canal, dividing the outer ear from the middle ear. This prevents bacteria from invading the middle ear from the ear canal.

Causes

A perforation on the eardrum can be caused by injury or infection. Foreign objects placed in the ear can penetrate the eardrum. Loud, repetitive sounds, trauma to the head, and pressure differences caused by diving or flying can also rupture the eardrum.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a perforated or ruptured eardrum can include pain, partial or complete loss of hearing, a buzzing sound in the ear, and drainage of fluid from the ear.

Treatment

A perforated or ruptured eardrum may heal on its own within about two months. However, in some cases the eardrum may need to be surgically repaired.

