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Flying Tips

Flying can sometimes cause an uncomfortable sensation. This is related to pressure changes in the middle ear. Air pressure decreases as you go higher and increases as you go lower. If the pressure is not equalized, the higher air pressure pushes on one side of the eardrum and causes pain.

The eustachian tube equalizes the air pressure between the middle ear and the outside of the ear. “Popping” of the ears while yawning or swallowing is a sign that the eustachian tubes are working and adjusting the pressure.

The pain is usually temporary and subsides within a few minutes as the eustachian tube opens to let the air pressure equalize on both sides of the eardrum.

- **Drink water during the entire flight**
- **Take Sudafed or a nasal decongestant** thirty minutes prior to take-off and thirty minutes prior to landing
- **Chew gum or suck on hard candy**
- **Yawn frequently**
- **Stay awake for takeoff and landing**
- **Hot Cups can assist with the pain** (ask the flight stewardess for a cup, place a warm towel in the cup, place the cup over the ear)

If ear pain continues for more than several hours, call your doctor for advice.