

He korero mo taringa mamae

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“Papa, papa, taringa mamae, taringa mamae.”

Ko tenei te tangi o tetahi o aku tamariki.

Ka titiro ahau ki tana taringa mamae, engari kaore i kitea te raruraru.

Ka tangi tonu te tamaiti i a po i a po.

Ka awangawanga ahau. Ka heria e maua ko taku hoa wahine

ki te takuta.

Earache is one thing I didn't think I would be writing about in my magazine but seeing as Tu Tangata wants to educate parents in looking after the health of their whanau, my experience as a parent may help others.

Of my five children, two have already had grommets inserted in their ears to drain away fluid that was affecting their hearing. And my six month old Hana will have to wait a few more months til she too can have her ears done.

Our first child to have his ears affected was little more than a baby when he used to wake up crying in the night holding his ears. As he was not yet talking it took a while to figure out what was wrong.

Fortunately my wife and I had good experiences with the Clarence Moore Medical Centre in Palmerston North at the time of our first child so we had no inhibitions about being a pest by visiting regularly for the slightest trouble. I guess it was with later experience that we gained more confidence in handling childhood illness.

Anyway our doctor explained that a build up of fluid in the inner ear wasn't draining away because the ducts were blocked. He explained that tiny grom-

mets would have to be inserted under general anesthetic in the hospital that would drain the fluid. These grommets would grow out naturally as the problem cleared up.

He did point out that sometimes children have more than one insertion of grommets if the problem reoccurs.

So our Kahu went into Middlemore Hospital with his mother as he was still being breast-fed. Thankfully he was out fit and well the next day. He's now five, his hearing is perfect and his bellow is something to be heard.

Our second child to have ear trouble, had recurring pain in both ears on and off for six years. It never got so bad that she was incapacitated, but it did make for some sleepless nights for her and us, as she used to come into our double bed.

We used to see the doctor who'd prescribe Amoxil, which usually meant she had an ear infection. This antibiotic became a favourite drink amongst our children. The course of medication would be finished and the ear trouble would clear up. Kei te pai, engari not for long.

Josie had a hearing test at school in her first year and it showed hearing loss in one ear. We had to wait for an-

other bout of ear infection to clear up before a second hearing test could be done. This took some mucking around with specialists and long waiting lists but finally the decision was made to have the grommets inserted.

She went into Wellington Hospital late last year with me and the operation only took a day. I was brassed off that the preparation time is so long, and unnecessarily so for young children.

Some advice here for parents: If you're asked to bring your child in on a Sunday evening for a Monday operation, tell the hospital you'll bring the child in on the Monday morning. I found that coming earlier than necessary is just for the convenience of hospital procedure and is tough on children in strange surroundings.

It's also tough on older patients who have to put up with boisterous children who wake up much earlier than others and make a lot of noise around sick people.

Also the fact that I wasn't allowed to be in the recovery ward when my little girl came out of the anesthetic, put unnecessary stress on my girl.

Heoi ano, I now find the potiki of the family, Hana, will probably need her ears fixed also. She's had a runny nose almost since she was born. She too is on our favourite medicine, Amoxil, which sort of keeps the pain and cough at bay.

I've been told that polynesian children are more likely to have ear trouble and that certainly is borne out in our family.

I hope our experience with taringa mamae will encourage other Maori parents to be watchful of their children's health and not hesitate to see a doctor or nurse if the child seems fretful or withdrawn. My wife and I are glad we did.