

Tired Anesthesiologist Accidentally Intubates Patient's Ear Canal

NORFOLK, VA - Once again fatigue has caused an unfortunate medical error, this time for anesthesiologist Gerald Williams. Wiped out from a tireless overnight call, Williams did something that has never before happened in the history of medicine: he intubated a patient's [ear canal](#). It's a medical first, but not in a good way.



"I can't believe I did just that..."

"Yup, you heard me correctly," explained anesthesiologist Gerald Williams to ENT. Gomerblog was on hand to overhear the conversation. "Punctured eardrum from an [endotracheal tube](#). I know, I know..." When he hung up the phone, Williams received consoling hands on his shoulder from several baffled colleagues.

"Truth be told, the human head has a lot of great landmarks," explained fellow anesthesiologist Kendra Adams. She pulls out a diagram to help, pointing as she continued. "For one, there's [eyes](#), two to be exact, a [nose](#), and the [mouth](#), which is typically where you want the endotracheal tube to end up. The neck is here, and the shoulders and [nipples](#) are warnings that you're aiming a little too low."

"I don't know what happened, I could've sworn that was his mouth," Williams responded defensively. "I mean, if you squint, it kinda..." The excuse fell on deaf ears, particularly the patient's left one. "I guess the ear canal is a [Mallampati Class 4](#)."

According to Vivian Mitchell, the surgeon present at bedside who watched in stunned silence as Williams' errors continued to amass, Williams finally had the "A-ha!" moment when the endotracheal tube emitted [earwax](#) instead of CO2. "And that's when he knew."

"The strange thing is that you always worry about knocking out a tooth, you know?" said Williams, yawning for everyone to hear. "Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine knocking out an ear drum." He paused. "Now that I think of it, maybe I could have maneuvered it down the Eustachian tube and into his airway... I should stop talking."