



*Ear Correction*  
(Otoplasty)

*see*  
**change**  
COSMETIC SURGERY

## *General information*

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Prominent ears are quite a common feature and can lead to a great deal of distress. They can be associated with asymmetry and in some cases minor degrees of deformity of the ear shape. Ear correction or otoplasty involves setting the ear back to a more natural position and may also involve some reshaping if there is some deformity.

The operation is done from behind the ear, leaving a scar on the back of it. The ear is set back and may be reshaped if this is needed.

## *Preparation for surgery*

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Smoking can cause problems with wound healing and increase your risk of a chest infection following general anaesthetic. You must not smoke for at least four weeks before your operation and for four weeks after it.

Please, only take medication prescribed by your doctor for the two weeks before and two weeks after your operation. In particular, herbal, homeopathic and nutritional supplements (including vitamin E capsules) may contain substances that increase your risk of bleeding and cause sun sensitivity.

Aspirin, and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) increase your risk of bleeding. You should avoid all such medicines for two weeks before and two weeks after your operation. If you are concerned, please check with your GP that it is safe to do so. In certain specific circumstances, you may be prescribed a NSAID for your post-operative pain, which you should take as directed.

If you drink alcohol, it is best to drink only a small amount for the week before the operation and for the first two weeks of your recovery. You should avoid it altogether if you are taking antibiotics or strong pain medication.

Your recovery after the operation will be easier if you are fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Regular exercise will help you cope with the operation better.

If you feel unwell leading up to your operation please inform our secretary, as it may be best to reschedule your operation for when you are well.

Do not have surgery if you may be pregnant.

## *The operation*

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Please come for your operation in loose-fitting clothing that can be easily and comfortably removed. Slip-on shoes are best, as bending over may be uncomfortable. Avoid nail varnish and heavy make-up. Rings, ear-rings and body-piercings should be removed at home. Bring your normal medication with you and a sufficient supply for the duration of your anticipated stay in hospital. Someone should accompany you to the hospital and home when you leave hospital.

The operation can be performed under local anaesthetic (awake) if you wish or under general anaesthesia (asleep). You should expect to be in hospital just for a few hours (day case). You will usually have a head bandage on afterwards. Getting up and about after the operation is important although it will be uncomfortable to start with. You should try to do this as soon as possible.

## *Care after your surgery*

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You will have a bandage around your ears after surgery. This should be kept on until you return to see the nurse. However it may slip or fall off. If this happens do not try to put it back on. It is best to remove it entirely and use a sports head-band instead.

The incisions will be closed with dissolving stitches and protected with a dressing. Keep the wounds dry while your head bandage is in place.

You may start to shower and wash your hair after removal of your bandage and dressings, unless specifically advised not to, but do not soak in a bath. Dry the area with great care, patting it gently with a towel. Once the scars are entirely dry, and no longer staining the dressing, you can stop covering them.

Once your head bandage has come off, wear a head-band at night time for a few weeks, to prevent the ears being bent forward.

After four weeks, if your scars a beginning to thicken up, provided that your scar has healed and is dry, start to moisturise and massage the back of the ear, with particular attention to the scars. Use any plain skin moisturiser (which can contain vitamin E if you wish) and rub the cream in with a gentle massaging motion for 5-10 minutes, three times a day.

All scars should be protected from the sun for the first year after surgery. Ideally they should be covered with clothing. If this is not practical, then total sun block should be used and the area shaded from the sun. Sun exposure of a fresh scar can cause permanent discolouration, resulting in a darkened, visible scar.

You should avoid becoming constipated after your surgery. If you are prone to this then you must take a stool softener during your recovery.

## *What to expect after your surgery*

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You will have a scar running along the crease behind your ear. These are usually red and slightly raised during the early period of healing. It takes a few months for the scars to settle fully and massage can aid this process, once it is comfortable enough to do so. Your ear may feel numb but this will gradually recover over several months. During this time you must avoid injuring the ear with hot things or earrings. Your ears will be swollen and bruised and may be tender,

which will settle after a few of weeks. You may find it more comfortable to sleep with a few pillows under your head. Please take your pain medication as directed until you are comfortable.

A follow-up appointment will be arranged for you when you leave hospital.

## *Driving and activity*

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All heavy and strenuous activity should be avoided for the first few weeks after your surgery. Graduated activity and exercise can then be started with full, unrestricted activity after twelve weeks, as your comfort allows. You will be able to start driving again when you feel comfortable and are safe doing so. This is usually between one and two weeks. Some car insurance companies have guidelines for driving after surgery and it is always best to check with your own company whether there are any restrictions imposed on you.

## *Complications*

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Although complications are uncommon, problems may occur as a result of your surgery. These can result in prolonged recovery but may also have an adverse effect on your final result. These include poor scarring (including keloid), bleeding, infection, delayed healing, wound breakdown, recurrence (ear springing forward again), persistent numbness or pain, and asymmetry or unevenness. Further surgery may be necessary to correct some of these, should they occur. A charge may have to be made for any additional treatment. There is also a small risk of developing a venous thrombosis (DVT), although measures are taken to minimise this risk.

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## *Additional comments*

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If you have any questions about the information contained in this leaflet or you do not understand something that is included in it, please contact our secretary for clarification.

If you are concerned about your recovery, have bleeding, feel unwell or have increasing pain then please contact Clare Park Hospital where your surgery was performed, our secretary (during office hours), your local A+E Department, or your GP.

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# *see* change

COSMETIC SURGERY

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