

## OTOPLASTY

### WHAT IS OTOPLASTY?

All ear surgery is geared to improve the aesthetics of the total facial appearance, from protrusion, defects, loss, or incorrect development.

If one ear is lower than the other, it can be repositioned to achieve symmetry. Oversized ears can also be corrected, as can defects in the ear structure that have existed from birth. The surgery adjusts the shape of the cartilage within the ear to create the missing folds, and is also performed to restore shape to ears that have been deformed by an injury.

### WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

In an otoplasty, your specific problem will be corrected and the results are almost immediately visible once the dressings and bandages are removed. There are a variety of problems that can be corrected. If you'd like ears that are more symmetrical, this can be achieved. Large ears can be made smaller, and ears that protrude can be 'pinned' back. This surgery usually has very satisfactory results, and when ears are surgically re-positioned closer to the head, the scars are well hidden behind the ear or in a natural crease.

## SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT OTOPLASTY

### How do I plan for my Otoplasty?

Before you make the decision to have a otoplasty, your surgeon will discuss whether the surgery is suitable for you. If the patient is your child, he or she should be at least five years old, and should be able to understand, be willing to co-operate and follow instructions. Children should be old enough to be able to express themselves, so they can voice any objections to undergoing the procedure.

You and your surgeon will discuss your goals to ensure that you'll have realistic expectations and will know what can be achieved. He or she will need to know your medical history, and what medications you take. You'll have a physical examination of your face and ears and the surgeon will take several photographs.

Many surgeons use software which can show the results that are possible and help you see what the final outcome will be. Before you decide on whether or not to go ahead with the procedure, you (or your child) should feel free to ask your surgeon any questions or discuss any fears or anxiety relating to the surgery.

**What is the procedure for an Otoplasty?**

Ear surgery is usually a two-hour procedure, but some procedures can take longer. The incision is usually made in the back of the ear and the exposed cartilage is reshaped against the head. Permanent stitches may be used to help maintain the new shape. The surgery will leave a faint scar behind the ear that will gradually fade.

To correct protruding ears, the surgeon will create or increase the fold inside the rim of the ear and reduce enlarged cartilage of the external ear.

The internal sutures used in this procedure are not removed, since they will keep the reshaped cartilage in place. The incision is closed with external sutures.

**How should I prepare for an Otoplasty?**

Before your surgery you may be asked to stop smoking for 2 – 4 weeks prior to the procedure. Nicotine retards the healing process, and quitting for as long as possible before surgery helps improve blood flow.

You will also have to have a blood test before surgery is performed.

You should stop taking certain medication, like aspirin and some anti-inflammatory drugs. Avoid recreational drugs, and disclose to your surgeon any other medication you're taking, since you may need to adjust these.

Be sure to arrange for transport to and from the clinic, since you will not be able to drive yourself after the procedure.

**Where will my Otoplasty surgery be performed?**

The surgery will be performed in one of our fully equipped operating theatres.

**What anaesthetic will be used for my Otoplasty?**

In children, surgery is usually carried out under general anaesthesia, but with older patients it may be possible to have the procedure done under local anaesthetic.

**How do I recover from my Otoplasty?**

Nearly everyone who has otoplasty is able to safely leave the clinic the same day after surgery. Few patients need to stay in the clinic overnight. You will experience some discomfort in the first week, but medication will help ease the pain. Your surgeon will give you some advice and instructions, like avoiding strenuous activities, and wearing clothes that don't need to be pulled over your head.

**What can I expect after my Otoplasty?**

If your child has the procedure, he or she should be active within a few hours of surgery, although some children may stay in the clinic overnight while the effects of the general anaesthetic wear off.

After the operation, the ears will be covered by a large bandage to help the moulding and healing. After about 10 days, the bandages can be removed, and any necessary stitches will also be removed.

Thereafter, a lighter headband-style dressing is often worn, particularly at night, for a few more weeks, and during this time you should avoid doing anything that might bend the ear.

**When can I return to normal activities?**

Most children who have this procedure can return to school after a week, but they should take care when playing or engaging in physical activity. Adults should also take about a week off and be sure to avoid strenuous activities. Remember not to drive or operate machinery for 48 hours after a general anaesthetic, or for 24 hours after intravenous sedation.

**What are the risks involved in Otoplasty surgery?**

As with most surgery, there are some risks, which include bleeding, usually minor, as well as the general risks associated with anaesthesia.

Other specific risks include infection, which can be treated with antibiotics, scarring that can become red and lumpy, and numbness or tingling for several weeks after surgery. There is a small risk that further adjustment surgery may be required.

**QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

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