

Otoplasty

Information for Patients

Otoplasty is the medical name for the operation to 'pin back' prominent ears. The operation is most commonly done for school-age children.

Before the operation

A photograph will be taken in the Medical Photography Department on the day you attend the clinic. You should receive an inpatient leaflet prior to admission, giving details about the hospital and fasting times.

The operation

This involves making a cut behind the ear and changing the shape of the cartilage, under general anaesthetic. The skin behind the ear is stitched. It usually takes around 45 minutes to do each ear. A head bandage is then applied.

Pain

During the operation a local anaesthetic is given around the ear to numb the area and a strong painkiller is also given to reduce pain afterwards. There is usually no pain immediately after the operation. Painkillers are given routinely back in the ward and may need to be continued at home. Occasionally the ears may be slightly sore for several weeks after the operation.

If pain is severe, especially if just one side, it may indicate a problem such as the bandage being too tight or an early infection. Please contact the Ward for advice.

Sickness

Occasionally sickness can be a problem. It is best not to let your child run around immediately after the operation. Medication can be given to help if necessary. The sickness is usually better by the following day. Anti-sickness medication is routinely given in theatre to help with this also.

Itching

Itching can sometimes be a problem, especially in hot weather. Scratching should be avoided to prevent damage to the wound. If itching is an issue, we would advise giving an antihistamine, such as chlorphenamine syrup, following the dosing instructions on the bottle.

Following discharge

Your child will probably be discharged the day of the operation. An appointment will be given to attend the Plastic Dressing Clinic (PDC) in the Out Patient Department, 1st floor approximately one week after the operation, to have the bandages and stitches removed. The ears may still be swollen and bruised but this should settle down within two weeks. A head bandage or wide sports head band must be worn at night for a minimum of two weeks to prevent bending or damage to the ears. It may be more comfortable to continue this practice for longer. Hair can be washed, taking care not to rub the ears. During cold weather it is best to wear a hat as the ears may feel slightly sore.

School

Some children prefer not to go to school with their head bandage on. To avoid damage to the ears, contact sports e.g. football/rugby must be avoided for six weeks following the operation.

Scar aftercare

To keep the scar soft and supple it is worth massaging the area with a moisturising cream, twice a day for six months following the operation. Despite doing this, the scar may still become slightly raised in some cases.

Other complications

As with any surgical operation there is a small risk of bleeding and infection. Do not remove the dressing yourself. You must contact your GP or Emergency Department immediately if you notice any of the following:

- Blood on the bandage
- The dressing becomes wet and dirty
- There is an offensive smell
- Your child complains of prolonged severe pain
- The bandage slips or falls off

Follow up

An appointment will be made to see your Plastic Surgeon two to three months after the operation. Another photograph may be taken to compare with the pre-operation photograph.

Contact Numbers

Surgical Admissions Unit (Crichton ward) – **0131 312 0970**

Emergency Department – **0131 312 0007**

PDC – **0131 312 0107** available Monday-Friday 8am-3.30pm (24hr answering machine)

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Otoplasty – Information for Parents