

Operation to reshape ears

Children's Ward

Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for young people who are considering having an operation to reshape their ears. It gives information on what the operation is for and what it involves. The medical name of the operation is pinnaplasty.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a member of the Children's Ward.

What is the operation for?

Although having ears that stick out does not usually affect a person's hearing, it can sometimes be embarrassing.

Ears sometimes stick out for the following reasons:

- The ears are injured
- There is too much cartilage in the ears
- The ridge of cartilage at the top of the ear does not fold properly as it develops

Cartilage is a tough, flexible tissue that is good for creating specially shaped and curved body parts that do not have support from bones.

The operation involves re-modelling the cartilage in the ear to position the ear(s) closer to the head.

It is carried out using a general anaesthetic. This means you will be asleep for the operation. The person who gives you the general anaesthetic is called an anaesthetist.

The anaesthetic is given to you through a cannula that is put into the back of your hand. A cannula is a thin, plastic tube (please see figure 1).

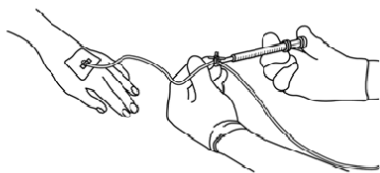


Figure 1 shows a cannula

What are the benefits of the operation?

The benefits are:

- Your ears should not stick out as much.
- The shape of your ears will be better.

What are the risks of the operation?

As with all operations, there are a few risks:

- Bruising and bleeding – if you have any bleeding through your bandages, or if you are in a lot of pain, please contact the Children’s Ward on 01384 244271 immediately.
- Wound problems – a nurse from your family doctor surgery will check your wound after the operation. If you are worried about your wounds, ring the Children’s Ward for advice.
- In a small number of patients, the ears may spring back slightly. If this happens, you may need another operation.
- Scars – you will have a scar, about three centimetres long, behind each ear.

- There may be a slight difference in the shape of your ears after the operation.
- A small ulcer could develop on the ear(s). This could take a few weeks to heal.
- There are some very rare risks if you have a general anaesthetic. Your anaesthetist will discuss these with you before you have your operation.
- After the anaesthetic, some people feel sick or are sick. You may have a headache, sore throat or feel dizzy or lightheaded but this should not last very long.

You can discuss the risks with your doctor.

Are there any alternatives?

There are no other ways to stop your ears from sticking out, but you do not need to have this operation if you do not want it.

What do I need to do before the operation?

If you are having your operation in the morning, you must not eat food or drink milky drinks (like hot chocolate) from midnight the night before. You can drink water or squash until 6am, on morning of your operation. After this, you must not drink (or eat) anything until after your operation.

If you are having your operation in the afternoon, you must not eat food or drink milky drinks (like hot chocolate) from 7am on the morning of your operation. You can drink water or squash until 10.30am that morning. After this, you must not drink (or eat) anything until after your operation.

If your operation is in the afternoon, it is a good idea to bring an overnight bag, just in case you need it. Include pyjamas, slippers, wash things, hairbrush, toothbrush and toothpaste. You should also bring any medications that you take, like inhalers.

You must bring your mum, dad or guardian with you.

What happens when I come for the operation?

You will have an appointment for the morning or the afternoon.

When you arrive at the Children's Ward, a nurse will ask you some questions and do some tests such as taking your:

- blood pressure
- heart rate
- breathing rate

The nurse will put a wrist band on each of your wrists and put cream on the backs of your hands. This cream is sometimes called magic cream. It makes the back of your hands numb so that you do not feel any pain. It is used so that when the anaesthetist puts a cannula into your hand to give you the anaesthetic, you will not feel this being put in.

The surgeon will come and see you and explain the operation to you. If you want to have the operation, the nurse will ask you and, if you are under the age of 18, your parent/guardian, to sign a consent form. This means that you are giving your permission for the surgeon to do the operation.

The anaesthetist will come and see you to check that you are well enough to have the operation.

The surgeon has a lot of operations to do and so there is a list of these. The surgeon does the operations in the order on this list. The nurse will be able to give you a rough idea of the time you will have your operation. However, sometimes there are delays if operations take a bit longer than they thought.

If you have any questions or worries, please ask the nurse who is looking after you.

What happens when I go for the operation?

A nurse will take you to the anaesthetic room to have your anaesthetic. Your mum, dad or guardian (only one of them) can go with you to the anaesthetic room and stay with you until you are asleep. Nurses will be looking after you all the time that you are asleep.

What happens after the operation?

When you wake up, you will be in a recovery room with a nurse. When the nurse is happy that you have recovered, they will take you back to the Children's Ward to your mum, dad or guardian.

You may still have a cannula in your hand when you go back to the ward. This can be used to give you medicine, if you need it. For example, some people feel sick after having a general anaesthetic. If you feel sick, tell your nurse and we can give you some anti-sickness medicine. We will take the cannula out before you go home.

You may have a bandage around your head after the operation, called a pressure bandage. This is to reduce the risk of bleeding and to keep the ears in their new position. You will need to keep this on for seven days.

When you are back on the Children's Ward, the nurse will give you a drink and some food, if you want it.

Will it hurt?

Some people have pain for a couple of days after the operation. We will give you medicine to get rid of the pain (painkillers) while you are having your operation. This is so that when you wake up, you should not feel any pain.

We will also give you painkillers regularly when you get back to the Children's Ward.

When you get home, it is a good idea to have painkillers regularly, such as Calpol. You must always read the label on this medicine and not take more than it says on the label.

If the pain does not go away after a few days, please speak to your family doctor or the Children's Ward. The number of the Children's Ward is:

01384 244271

When can I go home?

After your operation, we hope that you will only need to be in hospital for a few hours. However, you may need to stay for one night, if your hospital doctor thinks that is a good idea. Either your mum, dad or guardian can stay with you for the night.

After this time, you can go home when:

- you have eaten enough food and drink
- you are not having any bleeding from your ears
- you have had a wee
- you are not being sick
- you have a normal temperature
- your hospital doctor says you are well enough to go home

When you do go home, it is best for you to travel in a car as on public transport (buses, trains, metro), you are more likely to get an infection.

What happens when I get home?

- If you have a pressure bandage around your head, you will need to wear this for seven days. If the bandage moves or comes off, it is important that you have another one put on as soon as possible. Please contact the Children's Ward on 01384 244271 and they will be happy to help.
- When the pressure bandage is taken off, you will need to wear a normal bandage at night for another week. You can use a wide sports headband instead if you want. It is a good idea to buy this before the operation so that you have it ready.
- There will be a row of stitches behind each of your ear(s). These may be stitches that dissolve or they may need to be taken out. If the stitches need to be taken out, we will give you a letter to take to your family doctor. The nurse there can take them out about seven days after your operation.

Your hospital nurse will give you more information about this before you go home.

- You will not be able to wash your hair until the pressure bandage is taken off and the wounds have healed well. When you do wash your hair, it is a good idea to use a mild shampoo so that it does not sting.

When can I go back to school?

You can go back to school two days after your operation, if you feel OK, but you may want to wait until the pressure bandage has been taken off.

Can I go swimming?

You will not be able to go swimming for at least two weeks after the operation.

What about other activities?

If you do contact sports or boisterous (rough) activities, you will need to stop these for six weeks after your operation. This is to stop your ears becoming damaged.

What happens if I become ill?

If you feel ill, are sick or have a temperature when you get home, you will need to contact your family doctor or the Children's Ward. The number of the Children's Ward is:

01384 244271

Will I need to see the hospital doctor again?

If you need to see the hospital doctor again, we will give you an appointment before you leave hospital or send you one through the post.

Can I find out more?

The NHS Choices website has more information about this type of operation:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Ear-reshaping/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Children's Ward on 01384 244271

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/paediatrics-and-neonatology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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