
Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Prominent ear correction

Introduction

Prominent ear correction (also known as pinnaplasty) is an operation in which ears that protrude excessively are adjusted to a more normal position. In adults it can be carried out under local anaesthetic, on an out-patient basis, but in young children general anaesthetic is required. Usually the procedure takes place in the Day Surgery Unit.

Operation

The operation involves the removal of a certain amount of skin from behind your ear, together with some work on the ear cartilage (gristle) in order to reduce its tendency to spring back to its original position. It usually takes one hour or so to correct both ears, and the operation produces a curved vertical scar behind the ear. The scar usually heals well and becomes inconspicuous after several months; however, in certain individuals it may become thickened and prominent.

Discharge

- At the end of the operation, a head bandage covers your ears and this is to be worn for seven to ten days. This ensures that your ears remain in the correct position while healing takes place and prevents the ears from being pulled forward inadvertently, as this might lead to the wound opening up again. Should the bandages fall off or become loose at any stage, please contact the ward so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged to rebandage your ears.
- For post-operative discomfort, paracetamol (for example, calpol for children) usually controls the discomfort but you should contact the ward if the pain is severe or if you notice any bleeding through the bandages.
- If severe itching is a problem, contact your GP or ask the pharmacist at your local chemist, but please do not remove the hand bandage.
- The head bandage is removed on the ward and there may be a small number of stitches which require removal at the same time. Your ears will still be quite swollen and bruised at this stage, but you should not worry as they will settle down and look much better after a few weeks.
- Meanwhile, a head bandage should be worn at night for the first two to eight weeks after the stitches are removed. A sports head band is a suitable and much more convenient alternative, but you will have to provide this yourself.

- You may wash your hair after the bandage has come off but you should use a gentle shampoo such as baby shampoo or one intended for frequent use.
- Adults may return to work, and children to school, after removal of the hand bandage, but swimming and contact sports must be avoided for another four weeks.
- An outpatient appointment will be made for you to see the surgeon about three to four months after the operation.

Complications

No operation on the human body is without risk. A few of the more common problems are listed below. This list is intended to inform rather than frighten and these are the main complications of this surgery.

1. Scars

Occasionally these become slightly thickened but rarely they may become very prominent and unsightly. There is no way of predicting this response as it varies from person to person. Of course such scars can be treated but they are easily covered by the hair, and their position behind the ears makes them relatively inconspicuous.

2. Shape

Most ears are not perfectly symmetrical. Perfect symmetry cannot be guaranteed after the operation although large differences are uncommon. In some cases the shape of the ear is still not satisfactory after the operation, and further surgery may be required to correct this.

3. Haematoma

Occasionally blood comes through the dressings after the operation and this, especially if associated with severe pain, usually indicates persistent bleeding from the wound. You should contact the ward if this happens, as usually it requires a small operation to clear out any blood clots and control the source of the bleeding.

4. Wound breakdown

Very occasionally the wound may gape after removal of the stitches. If this happens further dressings on the ward are required until the wound heals on its own.

Depending on the size of the defect this may take a few weeks to heal but it tends to be a nuisance rather than a disaster as it rarely spoils the final result.

5. Stitches

Sometimes absorbable stitches are used for the back of the ear. These stitches do not require removal unless they work themselves onto the skin surface where they cause some irritation.

6. Anaesthesia

This involves some risk, as in any operation. Broadly speaking, the risks are of chest infection, blood clot formation in the veins of the legs (both of these risks are increased by smoking) and drug allergies.

If you have any questions, please contact the Plastic Surgery clinic (clinic 7):

- 01223 216098 Clinic 7 between 0800-1800 Monday-Friday
- 01223 216092 Clinic 7 answer phone

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Potete chiedere di ottenere queste informazioni in altre lingue, in stampato grande o in audiocassetta.

Italian

若你需要本信息的繁體中文、大字體或音訊格式的版本，請要求索取。

Cantonese

तमने आ माळिती भीष्ट भाषाओमां, मोटा अक्षरोमां अथवा सांभिणी शकाय ओवा माध्यम (ओडीओ इमेज)मां जेठनी छोय तो कृपा करीने पूछो.

Gujarati

تکایہ پرسپار بگہ نہ گہر نہ وزانیاریہت دہوی بہ زمانیکی تر . بہ پیتی گہورہ یانیش بہ شیوہی دہنگ

Kurdish

آگراپ کو یہ معلومات دوسری زبانوں میں، بڑے الفاظ کی اشاعت میں یا آڈیو ٹیپ پروکارہوں تو ہر اے مہربانی اس کیلئے درخواست کریں۔

Urdu



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Document history

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