

O TOPLASTY

If you are considering surgery we want you to be thoroughly informed about this procedure. Reading this information is the first step. However, a personal consultation with your surgeon is the best way to obtain any additional information you need.

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WHAT IS OTOPLASTY?

Otoplasty is an operation to correct prominent ears. This may be the most common problem that a plastic surgeon is confronted with. Prominent ears often affect self-image and interaction with others. Otoplasty is a procedure performed on the ears with very few complications and excellent success rates to improve the shape, orientation or size of the ears.

IS OTOPLASTY FOR ME?

Any of the following conditions may make you a good candidate for Otoplasty

- If you have prominent ears that stick out from your head
- If you have ears that are malformed in any way or shape
- If one ear is more prominent than the other
- If your ear is missing one of its folds
- If your earlobe is more prominent than the rest of the ear

INITIAL CONSULTATION

During the initial consultation you will be asked to point out exactly what you would like to see improved. This will help your plastic surgeon understand your expectations and determine whether they can be realistically achieved.

You will be asked about your medical history including previous operations, past and present medical conditions and current medications. In order to provide you with the best information and safest options, you must give your surgeon complete information. Medical conditions that may increase risks of surgery include high blood pressure, thyroid problems, diabetes and bleeding problems.

Pre-operative photographs may be taken during your initial consultation or a subsequent visit. Your surgeon will discuss with you the details

of the operation and the possible risks and complications associated with the procedure.

PREPARATION FOR SURGERY

Smokers will be asked to stop smoking 3 weeks before surgery as nicotine in cigarette smoke interferes with blood circulation. Aspirin and some anti-inflammatory drugs used for the treatment of arthritis can cause increased bleeding, so you should avoid taking these medications for 2 weeks before surgery. Otoplasty surgery is usually performed on an outpatient basis. If this is the case, make certain you have arranged for someone to drive you home after surgery and to stay with you at least the first night following surgery.

THE DAY OF SURGERY

After you are admitted to the surgical facility, if you have not already done so, you will need to sign the consent form for your operation. Your surgeon will mark your skin before the operation. The operation is usually performed under intravenous sedation. The anaesthetic is administered to maximise your comfort during the surgical procedure. During the anaesthetic various monitors are used to check your heart, blood pressure, pulse and the amount of oxygen circulating in your blood.

YOUR OPERATION

Because of individual factors not everyone will achieve the same results from Otoplasty surgery. Your plastic surgeon will select the surgical technique that he or she feels will obtain the best outcome for you. The essence of the operation is that the approach is from behind the ear and therefore no scars appear on the front of the ear. The ear cartilage is reshaped from behind and is held in the new position with stitches. Once the new shape is achieved you will have stitches behind your ears for approximately 5 to 7 days.

HOW LONG DOES THE OPERATION TAKE?

The operation takes 1 to 2 hours, depending on the extent of each case.

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AFTER SURGERY

When surgery is completed, you will be taken into a recovery area where you will continue to be closely monitored. You will have a bandage on your head, which will stay in place for anywhere from 3 to 7 days. There is surprisingly little pain but any discomfort you may feel will be controlled by pain medication. Once you have recovered from the anaesthetic you may have a drink and a light refreshment.

You will be able to go home after a few hours, although some patients may stay overnight in the hospital or surgical facility.

HOW WILL I LOOK AND FEEL INITIALLY?

It is important to realise that recovery time varies greatly among individuals. Otoplasty is not a particularly painful operation but you will have some discomfort, which is usually controlled by oral medication for approximately two days.

You will have stitches along the incisions, which will be removed after five to seven days. Once the head bandage is removed, you can have a shower. There will be some post-operative bruising and swelling which will subside over approximately two weeks.

WHEN CAN I RESUME MY NORMAL ACTIVITIES?

You should be able to get back to most physical activities within two weeks. This excludes contact sports, which you will be able to resume six weeks after the operation.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

Fortunately, significant complications from Otoplasty surgery are infrequent. Every year, many thousands of operations are performed with no major problems and good results. However, everyone considering surgery should be aware of both the benefits and risks. The subject of risks and potential complications of surgery is best discussed on a personal basis between you and your plastic surgeon.

The following is a list of possible problems sometimes associated with Otoplasty:

- Bleeding. This is most likely to happen the day of surgery. It is usually only mild oozing from the edges of the skin and stops by itself.

- Infection. This is uncommon after Otoplasty surgery but as with any operation, it may occur. Should this happen, antibiotics will be prescribed to treat the infection.

- Incomplete correction of the prominence. It is very important to communicate with the surgeon before the operation to make certain you have realistic expectations of the outcome.

- Asymmetry. Perfect symmetry of the ears is very difficult to achieve and slight differences between the two ears may occur.

You can help to minimise certain risks by following the advice and instructions of your plastic surgeon, both before and after your surgery.

RESULTS OF YOUR SURGERY

As the healing process is gradual you should expect to wait at least several weeks to get an accurate picture of the results of your ear surgery. Incisions will fade over a number of months until they become barely visible.

MAINTAINING A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PLASTIC SURGEON

Should there be any questions regarding surgery be sure they are answered in advance. Well-meaning friends are not a good source of information. Find out everything before proceeding with the operation: a well-informed patient is a happy one.

After surgery, you will return to your plastic surgeon's office for follow-up care at prescribed intervals, at which time your progress can be evaluated. Post-operative photographs will form a part of the evaluation of your result. Once the immediate postoperative follow-up is complete, many surgeons encourage their patients to come back for periodic check-ups to observe and discuss the long-term results of surgery.

Please remember that the relationship with your plastic surgeon does not end when you leave the operating room. If you have questions or

concerns during your recovery, or need additional information at a later time, you should contact your surgeon.