

Prominent ear surgery (children)

Ear reshaping is a type of cosmetic surgery used to treat protruding ears. The operation is also known as **otoplasty** or **pinnaplasty** where the cartilage is remodelled into a less protruding shape.

The procedure is considered safe and most people are happy with the result. However, as with all types of surgery there are some risks to consider.

Risks

- Infection where the cut was made.
- Inflammation of the ear cartilage.
- A blood clot – this may form in the skin of the ear and your surgeon may need to remove it.
- Scarring behind the ears.
- Problems with the stitches.
- Mild bruising around the ear. This may last for up to 2 weeks after surgery.
- Stiff ears – this can last for several weeks or sometimes a few months.
- Recurrence – in some cases the ears continue to protrude.
- Unsatisfactory appearance.

What to expect in hospital

Your child's operation will take place as a day case under a general anaesthetic. You and your child will be seen by an anaesthetist and your surgeon prior to the operation. They will check that your child is well and confirm that the operation is still necessary. You will be asked to sign a 'consent for treatment' form where the risks and benefits of the operation will be fully explained.

After the operation

Following the operation it is likely that your child will feel tired and possibly tearful. They may have a drink on return to the ward and will be encouraged to rest. The nurse looking after you will be assessing your child regularly and will let you know when it is safe for them to eat.

A bandage will be wrapped around your child's head to protect their ears and the surrounding area from infection.

The bandage may need to be kept in place for up to a week after the operation. Please try to keep it clean and dry. During this time you must not wash your child's hair. You will be able to wash your child's hair after the bandage has been removed but avoid getting the affected area wet.

Some surgeons recommend wearing a headband at night for several weeks to protect the ears whilst sleeping. Your child might find it difficult to find a comfortable sleeping position initially. They may need extra pillows to sleep in a more upright position for a few days.

During the first few days following surgery, your child's ears may be sore and tender, feel numb and there may be a slight tingling sensation for a few weeks.

Pain management

Regular pain relief is advised. Paracetamol (Calpol) can be given every 4-6 hours up to four times a day and ibuprofen (Nurofen) 6-8 hourly up to three times a day. Please read the bottle for the correct dose for your child according to their age.

Returning to school

Most children can return to school around 1-2 weeks after an otoplasty/pinnaplasty. To prevent injuring their ears, your child should avoid contact sports and playground games that involve physical contact for 3 months. No swimming for at least 8 weeks.

Nausea and vomiting

Do not worry if your child feels sick or vomits once or twice after leaving hospital. The anaesthetic can cause this and it is not an uncommon side effect.

If it occurs, stop giving food for an hour and try small, frequent amounts of water or diluted squash, then a light diet such as toast or plain biscuits.

Follow-up

A follow-up appointment will be arranged for you prior to discharge.

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 314333

Bluebell Ward, Lister Hospital:

- Telephone 01438 284008

Children's Day Surgery, Level 4, Lister Hospital:

- Telephone 01438 285775

Children's ED, Lister Hospital:

- Telephone 01438 284333

Paediatric Plastics Dressing Clinic, Lister Hospital:

Bramble Ward, Lilac Zone on Level 2

- Telephone 01438 285496

Leaflet information

You can request this information in a different format or another language;
please speak to your doctor or nurse.

Date of publication: June 2007

Version number: 4

Author: S Papanastasiou, J Callard

Reference: Children's Services

Review Date: January 2029

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