

Procedures - Ears (Otoplasty) Info and FAQ's

What is Otoplasty?

Otoplasty refers to surgery performed to correct prominent ears by setting them back closer to the head.

When is Otoplasty desirable?

The operation is usually performed after the age of 5 or 6 years. This corresponds to the time when the child is about to start school, when he or she may become embarrassed and withdrawn because of their perceived difference from their classmates. It may also be performed on adults.

How would this procedure help?

A consultation with your plastic surgeon is the first step when you are considering an Otoplasty for your child or yourself. You should frankly discuss your goals and expectations about the prospects of looking and feeling better after surgery. You should always keep in mind that the desired result is improvement, not perfection.

How is Otoplasty performed?

The operative technique will vary depending on the patient's physical features and your surgeon's methods. The aim is to create a more pronounced fold in the central portion of the ear by remodelling the cartilage. Skin is removed from behind the ear, part of the cartilage is folded or removed, and the ear is allowed to bend naturally towards the side of the head.

Is hospitalisation necessary for this?

An Otoplasty can be performed as a Day Case or alternatively with a short hospital stay. This will depend on the patient's general health, the extent of the procedure, and your surgeon's advice. Otoplasty may be performed under local or general anaesthesia. The procedure takes about 1 hour and recovery is usually rapid.

Are there any complications?

Although no major complications are expected in an Otoplasty procedure, bleeding and bruising may occur. Occasionally, a set back ear may protrude again, necessitating a second procedure. You should follow your surgeon's advice carefully to reduce the risk of complications. It is unrealistic to expect perfect symmetry between the two sides.

How important are psychological factors in relation to an Otoplasty?

Emotional stability is the primary factor to be considered before any aesthetic surgery is performed. Although some children are able to cope with the self-consciousness created by this condition, some may need extra help before fully benefiting from this surgery. Some people's anxiety about their ears may continue into adulthood, and this has to be discussed fully with your surgeon.

What post-operative care is required?

Patients are discharged with a head bandage, which is worn for up to 1 week. Bandages are often worn at night for a further 2 weeks.

When can normal activities be resumed?

Most patients are able to return to school or work in one week but are advised to avoid excessive exercise for 3 weeks.