

Otoplasty

Post operative instructions

Before your operation

- Organise for a responsible adult to accompany you home after your operation and stay with you for the full 24 hours after your surgery
- Plan to have approximately one week off work/school, however many patients find they are able to return a few days after their procedure

What to expect immediately after surgery

You can expect slight bleeding, mild pain and discomfort for a few days with mild swelling and bruising for up to 2 weeks.

Everyone recovers from their anaesthetic differently; but post operative nausea is a common side effect following general anaesthesia. If you are experiencing nausea we recommend eating light, small meals throughout the day. If nausea or vomiting is severe, please contact us.

What to expect for the first week post surgery

Constipation: Constipation is common following a general anaesthetic. To avoid constipation, ensure you drink plenty of fluids and foods containing fibre. If necessary, we recommend a gentle, laxative drink such as Movicol. This can be purchased from your chemist.

Pain relief: The majority of patients will experience mild pain following surgery. Pain should be manageable and will slowly ease over the course of your recovery. Your anaesthetist may provide you with pain medication, to be taken as directed.

If you have not been given a prescription, we recommend the use of Panadol or Panadol extra to manage any discomfort.

Do not take aspirin for at least 10 days following surgery as this can increase the risk of bleeding. If your pain is severe and does not subside with pain medication, please contact us

Positioning: For the first week following your procedure, we advise that you sleep on your back, elevation of the upper half of your body with 1 or 2 pillows will help reduce swelling. Please be careful not to sleep on your side or lay any significant pressure on your ears.

Driving: You are not to drive or operate machinery for 24 hours post surgery. You can drive when you can turn and look over your shoulder comfortably, which is usually after about one week.

Swelling: Your ears will be bruised and swollen following surgery, this will reduce over the course of your recovery, with a significant reduction in the first two weeks. It is important to note that your ears may appear asymmetrical for a period of time, as swelling does not always occur evenly on both sides. Subtle changes and resolution of swelling can be noticed for up to 6 months following your operation.

Dressings: Keep the dressings dry and in place until your first post operative appointment, your incisions may seep some fluid and blood for a short time following surgery. You may shower or bathe the day following your operation, but you must keep your ears dry.

Exercise: Avoid bending, straining and heavy lifting for the first week following surgery.

In addition to aggravating swelling, these activities may elevate blood pressure and start bleeding. It is important to avoid contact sports which may result in a knock to the ears, such as football or karate.

Removal of sutures: We will normally remove sutures at your first post operative review. If absorbable sutures have been used, removal will not be necessary.

Recovery after the first week

Exercise: After approximately 2 weeks you may be able to resume light exercise, strenuous lifting and household duties such as cleaning. Vigorous exercise can usually be resumed after 4-6 weeks; We recommended caution is taken in contact sports to protect the ears from knocks or bumps.

Scar Management: Otoplasty scars will generally be slightly red for a few months and then begin to fade, however scars are very well camouflaged behind the ears. On your second post operative visit you will be advised on the most effective scar management options to ensure you have the best possible outcome.

Head band: You will be given a post operative head band in your first post operative appointment, this is to be worn for the first two weeks 24 hours a day to maintain pressure on your ears. After the two week period, we recommend wearing the headband at night only for 2 months following your surgery.

Alcohol: Alcohol can increase post-operative bleeding and can be dangerous in combination with your pain medication. Do not drink alcohol until you have finished taking all pain medication.

Smoking: We recommend you do not smoke for at least 3-4 weeks following your operation as smoking impedes blood flow to the skin and increases healing time.

Contact us if you develop:

- A fever or become unwell
- Nausea and vomiting which persists after 48 hours
- Spreading redness/rash over the operative area or suture lines
- Fluid build up in your eyelids or sudden swelling in the area
- Pain which is not relieved or controlled by your pain-killers
- Have sudden copious discharge of fluid or oozing from your wounds
- For after hours emergencies or if you are unable to contact the office, visit your local GP or emergency room.