

# Your child's pinnaplasty

**This leaflet explains about a pinnaplasty (an operation to correct prominent ears). If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff caring for your child.**

## Why have a pinnaplasty?

Prominent ears are perceived as sticking out too far from the side of the head. A pinnaplasty is an operation to correct prominent ears or other asymmetry (where the two ears look different) of external parts of ears. In many cases the shape and lie of the ears can run in families. People with prominent ears are sometimes teased, mainly during school years, which may lead to a loss of self-confidence.

An operation is the only way to correct prominent ears. This procedure is mainly cosmetic and it is completely your and your child's decision to go ahead with this form of treatment. The operation is best carried out when a child is aged six or older, as our ears are nearly fully developed at this stage.

## What does a pinnaplasty involve?

The operation involves removing small amounts of skin from behind the ear and adjusting the ear cartilage in order to minimise its tendency to return back to its original position. It takes up to two hours. The operation will be carried out under a general anaesthetic. For more information, please ask for a copy of our leaflet, **Your child's general anaesthetic**.

## What happens before the surgery?

Your child will be assessed by a plastic surgeon in our outpatient department and the procedure will be explained to you. You will then be asked to attend a preoperative assessment, where you can ask further questions. You will be given instructions on when your child should stop eating and drinking before the operation to prepare for having a general anaesthetic.

## What happens after the surgery?

After the operation your child will return to the ward (usually Beach Ward) where they will be monitored for a period of time. A head bandage will be applied in theatres. The nurses will make sure your child is comfortable and give appropriate pain relief if required. Usually there is no need for an overnight stay.

## Are there any risks?

All operations carry a degree of risk of infection or bleeding. Initial swelling settles within a couple of weeks so the final result may not be visible straight away. At times the ear shape may soften and sometimes return to the ears' original position before surgery. There is also a possibility of some overcorrection of the position leading to asymmetry between sides.

## When you get home

Make sure you have some paracetamol available at home to help with pain relief and follow the instructions on the packet.

The length of time that the dressing is required for varies from child to child, but is usually between few days to a week. Try to keep the head bandage as clean and dry as possible and discourage your child from disturbing the wound, as it may feel itchy under the bandage. Your child will need to return to the dressing clinic to check if wound is healing well. This takes place between seven to 10 days after the operation. Unless you had received specific advice about bandage removal from your consultant before leaving hospital, please follow the advice below.

### If the bandage falls off within the first five days after surgery

- Please replace the bandage by using pads of gauze gently placed on top of the ears and a crepe bandage around the head.
- If you are concerned or unsure what to do, telephone the clinical nurse specialist for paediatric plastic surgery, Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.
- Outside of those hours, please attend your local emergency department (A&E) for the bandage to be replaced.

### If the bandage falls off after five days

- If all appears to be healing well, the bandage usually doesn't need replacing but the headband should be worn at night.
- If you have any concerns, please contact the clinical nurse specialist for paediatric plastic surgery.
- Otherwise, try and keep the bandage on for seven days until review in the dressing clinic.

The stitches used are dissolvable and will not need to be removed. After the bandage is removed, your child should wear a soft headband at night for six to eight weeks following the operation. This is to avoid damaging the ears while sleeping. Make sure that the headband is not too tight to avoid extra pressure on ears. Extra pillows can be used for more comfort and for your child to sleep more upright. Your child will usually be able to have their hair washed one week after surgery. They can usually return to school after being seen in the dressing clinic.

## Should my child avoid any activities?

Your child should avoid the following:

- swimming for six weeks after the operation
- contact sports or rough play for three months after the operation
- rubbing ears with a towel after a hair wash until the consultant's review in clinic.

## What if I'm concerned about my child?

You should contact the clinical nurse specialist or Beach Ward if:

- your child has developed a temperature of 37.7°C or higher
- the operation site is bleeding, oozing or there is a bad smell from the wound site
- the operation site is inflamed or hot to touch
- your child is experiencing increased pain that cannot be controlled by painkillers.

Please see our contact details over the page.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child, please contact the clinical nurse specialist for paediatric plastic surgery (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) on **t:** 07342 066727. Alternatively, call the hospital switchboard on **t:** 020 7188 7188 and ask for the bleep desk. Ask for bleep 3040 and wait for a response.

Outside of those hours, telephone Beach Ward on **t:** 020 7188 8844 or **t:** 020 7188 9206.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** [www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm **e:** [letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk)

## Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

## Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

**t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** [languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

## NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111 **w:** [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk)

## NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

**t:** 0800 731 0319 **e:** [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk) **w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership)

**Leaflet number: 4324/VER2**

Date published: March 2020

Review date: March 2023

© 2020 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

A list of sources is available on request