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Otoplasty (Ear Surgery)



The procedure to reduce excessive ear prominence or reshape portions of the ear is called otoplasty. Excessive prominence or deformities of the ear can detract from the aesthetic balance of the face and restrict hairstyle options.

The external ear is composed of skin and a cartilage framework. Otoplasty procedures reshape deformities of the cartilage framework, redrape the skin over the reshaped framework, and position the ear in a more pleasing balance with the head and face.

If the earlobes are excessively large, they can also be corrected during otoplasty.

Limitations

The ears are never exactly the same size or shape. Although their shape and position are improved by otoplasty, small differences will exist after surgery.

The framework of the ear is cartilage. If you pull it out of place, it tends to spring back to its original position. That tendency is reduced during surgery, by weakening and reshaping the cartilage. Because of this tendency there is a slight chance of reoccurrence of prominence. In those cases, a revision procedure may be necessary.

Risks

Other risks common to all surgical procedures such as bleeding, infection and scar tissue formation occur in a very small percentage of cases. We encourage you to discuss any concerns you may have, during your consultation.

About The Operation

The exact procedure necessary varies with the degree and location of the ear deformity.

Incisions for otoplasty are placed behind the ears to minimize visibility. In specific areas, the skin is elevated and the underlying cartilage framework exposed. The cartilage is then reshaped using techniques of scoring, suturing, limited removal or combinations of the three.

The reshaped framework is then repositioned to achieve the best balance with the opposite side and to reduce excessive projection. The skin is

redraped, any excess skin is removed, and the incision behind the ear is closed. A gentle pressure dressing is placed to prevent excessive fluid accumulation beneath the skin.

Recovery

To minimize swelling or fluid collection beneath the skin, you'll have a dressing on your head to put gentle pressure on your ears and maintain their new position. This dressing will be removed in two or three days.

All of your incisions will be carefully closed with stitches, which dissolve and don't have to be removed. You'll be able to wash your hair as soon as your head dressing is removed the second or third day after surgery.

Following otoplasty procedures, most patients have very little pain. There is mild soreness, mostly when you bump or move your ears, for a week or two. We'll prescribe medication for discomfort after surgery. Most patients require medication for only a day or two.

You'll notice some swelling in the ears for two to three weeks following surgery. Most bruising will resolve in the first week or two. During this time, you can cover your ears with your hair.

The Stages Of Recovery

Our patients usually want to know about four stages of recovery: hospitalization time, when swelling or bruising is resolved, when they'll be able to return to work or social activity, and when they can return to full aerobic or strenuous exercise.

For otoplasty procedures:

Hospitalization time: An Otoplasty is performed as an outpatient procedure in our office.

Bruising and swelling resolve: 5-10 days.

Return to work, social activity: 4-10 days.

Aerobic or strenuous activity: 14-21 days.

We encourage returning to full normal activity immediately. Don't do any type of strenuous exercise that would push your pulse over 100 for about two to three weeks. Any aerobic activity that increases your pulse over 100 also increases your blood pressure, and could make you bleed.