

## **OTOPLASTY – Surgery of the ear**

Surgery of the ear, also known as otoplasty, is a procedure that helps reduce protrusion of the ear away from the head. Most often, ear surgery is performed on children between the ages of four to fourteen. Ears that “stick out” are often the source of teasing and ridicule in young children. This teasing can have a devastating effect on the child’s psyche. Occasionally this problem may lead to shy and introverted behavior. the results are satisfying to both the patient and their parents.

Otoplasty is not limited to children and may also be performed on older patients. Cosmetic procedures are available for those individuals with large ears and for those with congenital (birth) irregularities that detract from their appearance. Additionally, an individual’s ears may exhibit abnormal traits due to their genetic make-up or an accidental injury, such as losing an ear or part of an ear. Otoplasty is used successfully for each of these situations. Regardless of the procedure, patients have been pleased with the long-lasting improvements to their appearance offered by ear surgery. Dr Gahankari has performed this operation on several adults who waited several years to gather courage to undergo the procedure.

### **Reasons for Considering Ear Surgery:**

- Bring proportion to the face if the ears “stick out” too much.
- Correct folded ear tips (lop ear).
- Reshape long or offset earlobes.
- Enhance very small ears or other congenital defects.
- Remedy an accidental injury, including the loss of an ear.

### **General Procedure**

The standard otoplasty procedure brings the ears closer to the head. The incisions are normally placed behind the ear to avoid visible scars after the operation. Dr Gahankari uses the modern techniques of achieving the good results in suitable patients with relatively small scars. The essential part of the procedure is skilful sculpting of the protruding ear cartilages to create the natural curves and folds of normal ear. The procedure takes approximately one to two hours, depending upon the extent of surgery.

The surgery is performed under general anaesthetic although in adults it can be done under twilight light general anesthesia or local anaesthetic.

Post-operatively a pressure bandage is used for 7-10 days and subsequently a broad head-band. Most of the swelling and bruising subsides within two weeks however, contact sports are avoided for about six weeks.

Children are operated usually after or around age six. At this age the development of the ear is nearly completed and the child is cooperative enough to follow the instructions.

With proper post-operative care, the risk of the complications is very minimal in these young healthy children. Documented risks of the procedure include haematoma, infection, asymmetry and rarely scar related problems.

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