

Otoplasty Instructions

This handout provides information on how to prepare for your otoplasty operation and what to expect as you are healing after your operation. Please read the handout carefully. Feel free to ask questions at any time.

Important information about preparing for your otoplasty operation:

1. Do not take products containing aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), Vitamin E or red wine for 2 weeks prior or for 2 weeks after your operation. Many medications contain these compounds which are known to prolong bleeding. It is safest to take only Tylenol® for aches and pains prior to your operation.
2. Your prescriptions will be sent to you ahead of time. You should fill these prior to your operation and have them available for when you arrive home from the hospital.
3. Adult patients should arrange for a friend or family member to stay with them for the first 24 hours following the operation.
4. Be aware that you will not be able to fly for two weeks following your operation and please plan accordingly.
5. In general, you will need one week off from school or work. You will feel fine within days of your operation however the large head bandage is conspicuous and will keep you from mingling with the public.

On the day of your operation:

- Do not wear makeup, nail polish, contact lenses or jewelry on the day of your operation. Do not use hairspray, gel or mousse.
- Please keep your valuables at home.
- Wear comfortable clothing that is easy to dress in and out of. Wear a shirt that buttons down the front.

After your operation:

1. After your operation, you will wake up with a bandage on your head that will stay in place for 7 days. The bandage will be removed by Dr. Bartlett in the office. Keep this bandage clean and dry.
2. Bring a skier's headband to your one week follow-up appointment. After the head bandage is removed, you will wear the skier's headband full-time, day and night for one week and then only at night for 6 more weeks. The skier's headband prevents the ears from curling over. If you cannot wear the headband at school or work, please discuss with Dr. Bartlett.
3. After your one week appointment, you may shower and wash your hair and then replace the skier's headband.
4. Sleep with your head elevated on several pillows arranged in a wedge.
5. Use the pain medication as prescribed when you are feeling uncomfortable.
6. Once home, you may get up to use the bathroom or to take a light walk around the house. Exercise caution in your home and be careful with tasks such as climbing stairs when you are taking pain medications.
7. An occasional complaint after the operation is nausea, although this generally passes within 24-48 hours. It is important that you drink liquids frequently after your operation. Do not take your pain medication on an empty stomach as you may experience nausea and/or vomiting.
8. It will be at least 2 weeks before you can begin light exercise such as walking or using a stationary bike.
9. Heavy exercise, heavy lifting and activities that may harm ears are not permitted for 6 weeks. Diving or swimming with your head in the water is not allowed for 6 weeks.
10. Adult patients will be able to drive after one week. Be aware that pain medications cause drowsiness and should not be used before driving.

What to expect as you are healing:

1. Your ears will be sore, swollen and bruised. These changes are normal and will take several weeks to subside.
2. Numbness of the ears is common and usually gets better over a period of several weeks or months. Use caution when using blow dryers to prevent burning the ears.
3. The sutures behind the ears dissolve in approximately 12-14 days.
4. Your incisions may be raised, red, and feel hard for several months. The final result of healing will not be apparent for approximately one year after the operation.
5. The final result from Otoplasty has to be judged 3-6 months after surgery.

Follow-up appointments:

1. You will have several follow-up appointments after your otoplasty operation.
2. Your first follow-up appointment will be at 1 week. Your head dressing will be removed and you will begin wearing your skier's headband.
3. Your second appointment will be three weeks after the operation.
4. Subsequent appointments are usually at two to three months, as suggested by Dr. Bartlett.

If you have any questions you may reach Dr. Bartlett by calling the office at 617-735-1800 during and after hours.