

Otoplasty Postoperative Instructions

Pain Medication:

- Take 2x paracetamol tablets (Panamax, Panadol) every 6 hours regularly for the first 3-5 days.
- Take Ibuprofen or nurofen (200-400mg) up to three times a day (with food) if needed. This can be taken with either paracetamol or oxycodone.
- For severe pain, take oxycodone (endone) or Panadeine forte as instructed on the packet. Do not take paracetamol if you are taking Panadeine forte.
- If your pain is severe and not relieved by endone, please call the office or Dr Vrtik (if after hours). Sometimes the pain could be due to bleeding, or the bandage being too tight – these need to be attended to promptly.

Ice Packs, Swelling and Bruising:

- Do not lie down as the swelling and bruising will worsen. Elevate the head as much as possible, on extra pillows at night time for 3-5 days.
- It is ok to sleep on your ears with the bandage on.
- Sometimes the swelling and bruising can track into your neck area underneath your earlobe, this will settle with time and is nothing to worry about unless accompanied by severe pain.
- It is unusual for the swelling or pain to worsen after 7 days. If this occurs, you may have an infection, please contact the rooms.
- The bruising (which you will notice after your bandages come off) will start to improve after 7-10 days, in some, up to 2 weeks.

Dressings & Hygiene:

- DO NOT REMOVE the bandage on your head. Keep it clean and dry, avoid activities that may cause excessive sweating inside your bandage.
- DO NOT try to wash your hair.
- You can wipe your face with a wet towel.
- DO NOT apply any makeup, ointments or creams over the tapes or around your eyes.

Sleeping:

- Sleep with your head elevated on at least 2-3 pillows for 3 days after surgery. To ensure a good night sleep, take your pain medication prior to sleeping. It is not unusual to be particularly sleepy and tired after an operation or an anaesthetic. Take time to rest as needed.
- Once the bandages come off – you need to wear your headband to sleep every night for at least 8 weeks.

Diet:

Recovering from a general anaesthetic is like recovering from the flu. Start with clear liquids; then advance to soft, non-spicy foods over the next 2 days.

Activity:

- Remain seated and quiet for the first 24 hours. Avoid bending, heavy lifting, pushing, pulling or straining for at least 3 days. All these activities may cause bleeding, bruising and swelling in your ear.
- You should be able to drive 24 hours after your anaesthetic.

- You can swim after 2 weeks, but you must wear a swimming cap with your ears tucked under for at least six weeks after the operation.
- You can start exercise after 4 weeks, graduate your level progressively over the following 4 weeks to follow. Intermittent swelling of your ears with activity and tiredness is not unusual in the first 3 months.
- No contact sports for 8 weeks is recommended.

Follow-up:

Follow-up is usually 5-7 days after surgery for wound check and removal of your bandages. Make sure you call the office to establish date and time if you have not already received your first post-operative appointment.

Headband:

After your dressings are removed, you will be able to have a shower, and wash your hair as usual, using your soaps and shampoo. You must put your headband over your ears all the time for 6 weeks, then at night only for 2 weeks more. The headband can be removed when you have a shower. If areas on your ear are particularly painful due to the pressure from your headband, use a broader or looser band to redistribute the pressure.

Please Ring the Office if:

- You have a temperature over 38 degrees Celsius 48 hours after surgery. (A low-grade fever up to 37.5 degrees Celsius for 1-2 days is normal after surgery)
- Severe pain despite taking your pain killers.

What to Expect after Otoplasty:

- While your ears are swollen, there may be some asymmetry. The appearance may also look unnatural. **DO NOT WORRY.** This will improve as swelling subsides. **MOST SWELLING AND BRUISING WILL PERSIST FOR AT LEAST SIX WEEKS, UP TO THREE MONTHS, SOMETIMES EVEN LONGER. THIS IS VERY COMMON. YOU MUST BE PATIENT TO ALLOW EVERYTHING TO HEAL AND SETTLE NATURALLY.**
- To prevent postoperative bleeding, do not cough excessively after surgery. If you have to cough and sneeze, try to minimise the impact by allowing the air to escape via an open mouth.
- When the nerve recovers, you may experience tingling, buzz, or electric shock sensation periodically around the ears. This is expected, and will disappear after a few months. The numbness at the back, rim and tip of ears can last for months. Often this will slowly recover over time.
- The irregularities, pleats and puckers that are palpable behind your ears will settle. They smooth out with time, but can again take several weeks.
- Your ears may appear quite severely pinned back, but this will relax over time as the scars soften within the cartilage of your ear. It can take up to 6 months for the contours of ear to finalise.
- Remember, surgery takes time to settle, and often at 8 weeks, you'll look very good, but you will not look your best yet! Often patients look better at 6 months than at 2 months after surgery.

Contact Telephone Numbers:

During Office Hours and Non-Urgent Matters – 3353 6165

After hours and for Emergencies only – 0421739149

