

Patient Advice Sheet on Myringoplasty
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What is in my ear?

At the end of your ear canal is your eardrum. It is a piece of skin. It separates the middle ear from the ear canal. The eardrum collects the sound.

Behind the drum is a space which is full of air. This is the middle ear cavity. The sound passes across this space through a chain of bones. It enters the inner ear. This is the organ of hearing itself.

The middle ear cavity opens into the Eustachian tube. This passes into the back of your nose. It is usually closed. It opens every few times you swallow. Air passes up into the middle ear. The pressure of the air in the middle ear is then the same as outside.

Why do I need the operation?

Your eardrum has a hole in it. It has been there for some time. It will not heal. We can close it off. It is probably due to infections in childhood weakening the drum. It eventually breaks down.

What good will it do me?

It depends but it may improve your hearing. It may prevent infections. Germs may go through the hole particularly if water gets into the middle ear. You may be able to swim without worrying about your ears.

Do I have to have this operation?

No. It is up to you. We call it elective. Without the operation your ear will stay as it is.

What else can I do?

A hearing aid may improve your hearing. Taking care with swimming and when bathing, showering or washing your hair may prevent infections. You can try swimming with ear-plugs.

Why do I have to wait for the operation?

Adults don't if the hole has been there a while. We prefer to wait a while in children.

We want the patient to understand the risks and benefits. Children get more ear infections than adults. We want the child to have grown out of this.

What can go wrong?

The graft may not take. This happens in about 10% of patients. We can try again. Your hearing can become worse. This can be permanent (forever). Serious hearing loss can occur but is very uncommon.

Can anything serious happen?

Serious complications are very uncommon. All operations and anaesthetics have risks. Some are serious. The risks are similar to those of everyday life. Examples are flying on holiday; driving in a car or walking down a street.

How long will I be in hospital and off work?

You will usually be in for a day or an overnight stay. Take two weeks off work.

Myringoplasty

Will I be asleep?

Usually you are. This is called general anaesthesia. The doctor who makes you go to sleep is called an anaesthetist. He or she will tell you about your anaesthetic.

How is the operation done?

We make a cut behind or just above the ear. We take a small piece of tissue (graft) from near the ear. We use it to plug the hole in your eardrum. It takes about an hour.

Will there be anything in my ear afterwards?

A dressing is put into the ear canal. It removed at your next appointment. This does not hurt.

What about a bandage?

We usually put on a light head bandage overnight.

Are there any stitches?

The cut is stitched. The stitches can be removed by your practice nurse after 5-7 days.

When can I go home?

You can go home the same day or the next day. After a GA you must recover on the ward for two hours first.

Will my ears be sore?

There is usually little pain. DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN IF YOU ARE UNDER 16. Paracetamol can be taken if needed.

What will I feel like afterwards?

The ear may feel blocked for a few weeks. This is due to the dressing and blood clot in the ear. The graft can take six weeks to heal.. You may feel a little dizzy at first. Bleeding is uncommon. Wound infection is also uncommon. Both occasionally occur.

What do I need to avoid afterwards?

- Do not blow the nose hard. This can dislodge the graft.
- To avoid colds keep away from crowds for ten days. A cold could stop healing or cause bleeding.
- Try not to let the ear or wound get wet.
- Avoid excessive activity or heavy lifting for ten to fifteen days.
- Avoid any activity which could make you hot or flushed.
- Swimming again after 6-8 weeks but ask us first.
- Avoid aircraft travel for 4 weeks.
- Mr Jones will allow such flight in certain circumstances. Please ask.

What can I do?

Any normal light activity such as a gentle stroll is OK.

May I ask a question?

At any time. You can also refuse to have the operation at any time. If you ask a question please ask someone suitable. A junior doctor or nurse may not know what you want to know. Please do not ask several doctors the same question and compare answers.