

**C R A I G**  

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**FACIAL PLASTIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY**  
**OTOLOGY**

**OTOPLASTY**

**Otoplasty** is the name given to the procedure used to reposition or "pin back" protruding ears. This procedure is performed on both children and adults. Younger children are often given general anesthetic and may spend one night in the hospital. Adults may have the surgery in an outpatient setting with the use of a local anesthetic and intravenous sedation.

An incision is made in the back of the ear, in the crease where the ear joins the back of the head. The ear automatically hides the thin scars located behind each ear. A small amount of skin and/or cartilage is removed and stitches are placed in the cartilage to create folds that were not present before. These cartilage sutures hold the ear until the incision heals and forms scar tissue that will hold the ear in its new position. A soft bandage is worn about the head, covering the ears for approximately one-week following surgery. At the end of that time, the bandages and skin stitches are removed and most patients may return to work or school. After the bandage and stitches are removed, the patient is asked to wear a cap or headband pulled down over the ears while sleeping to protect them for another three weeks following surgery.

No one has ears that are exactly identical, even after surgery. Almost always, the right ear is a little different from the left. However, after successful ear surgery, the ears should appear more symmetrical and natural looking.

**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Sleep with the head of the bed elevated. (Use of two pillows can accomplish this task.) Also, the patient is asked to sleep on their back. This alleviates pressure on the ears and helps to reduce any swelling that may occur.
2. Following bandage removal, a cap or headband pulled down over the ears while sleeping to protect them is worn for 3 weeks.
3. There is a small amount of discomfort following otoplasty. Pain medication has been prescribed, but you may find that taking over-the-counter acetaminophen is sufficient to handle any pain. When taking any prescription medication, please take it with food, on a full stomach to avoid possible stomach irritation.
4. Antibiotics have also been prescribed. Please finish all medication. Taking antibiotic medication with food is also helpful to reduce stomach irritation.
5. Avoid strenuous activities; no heavy lifting or aerobic-type activities for a full two weeks following surgery. Expect to return to work or school after a 7 to 10 day period.
6. Care of the incision sites includes a daily cleansing with a mixture of 1/2 Hydrogen Peroxide to 1/2 water, applied with cotton-tipped applicator to the suture sites; followed by application of antibiotic ointment 3 to 5 times daily.
7. Please report any increase in redness, warmth or swelling; a fever of 101° or higher; bleeding that lasts longer than a few minutes after applying minimal pressure; or persistent pain unrelieved by medication.