



Mastoidectomy

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

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1.1.	January 2017	New logo
2.0		
2.1		
3.0		

What is the mastoid?

It is a part of the skull that is behind the ear. This part of the skull is connected to the middle ear which is filled with air.

Why does my child need a mastoidectomy operation?

There is an infection in the middle ear and mastoid, that has not been cleared with antibiotics. Often skin from the middle ear grows into the mastoid and damages the bones. This is called a cholesteatoma.

Your child may have problems with the discharge from the ear and this operation should prevent further discharge. Usually the operation does not improve your child's hearing but it should prevent it from getting worse.

What does the operation involve?

Your child is given a general anaesthetic and is asleep during the operation. Usually a small cut is made behind the ear; occasionally a cut is made just above and in front of the ear. These wounds heal quickly and the ear looks normal with minimal to no scarring. Diseased bone is removed creating a larger cavity in the ear that is easier to keep clean. If there is a hole in the ear drum it is repaired using tissue near the ear.

Are there any risks?

During the operation it may become evident that more of the structures such as the small bones in the middle ear (ossicles) need removing. This may mean that your child's hearing is worse after the operation. The surgeon will try to replace the small bones, and preserve hearing.

There is a facial nerve that crosses the middle ear. Very rarely this may be damaged during the operation causing permanent weakness in the face muscles. The nerve for taste crosses near the ear. If it is damaged you may lose taste on one side of the tongue.

What happens after the operation?

On return from theatre your child's ear will have a dressing inside, so they may not be able to hear very well. There will also be a bandage around the ear. The nurse will check that they are comfortable and give medication for pain. Some children can go home later the same day. Or go home the following day, this depends on the time of the operation and how comfortable your child is.

Will my child's ear hurt?

Your child's ears can be uncomfortable for the first few days. You should give regular pain killers for the first few days. Please follow the instructions on the bottles/pack.

What will my child's ear feel like?

Your child's head bandage will need to be removed in 24 hours. There is a dressing inside the ear that is soaked in yellow antiseptic. This stays in the ear for a few weeks and will be removed in ENT clinic. It is usual for some discharge of yellow/bloodstained fluid from the ear for a few days. During this time, the ear will feel blocked up and your child may feel dizzy.

When can my child return to usual activities?

- Your child can return to school in 2 weeks.
- Avoid crowded places for 2 weeks.
- Prevent the ear from getting wet until the dressing is removed from inside the ear. It may be necessary to keep the ear dry for up to 6 months, depending on how quickly the ear heals.
- Restrict your child from excessive activity for 2 weeks, such as riding their bike, or doing sports.
- Discourage your child from blowing their nose hard for 2 weeks.

When will my child be seen again?

Usually the wound is sealed with surgical glue, but some children need to return to have stitches removed.

You will be given an appointment to come back to the hospital in a few weeks.

The ear can take up to 3 months to heal following a mastoid operation.

Your child may need to come back to hospital via A&E or phone for advice if:

- The ear discharge looks or smells infected,
- There is any fresh bleeding through the bandage,
- Your child still has pain after taking the pain killers,
- Your child is generally unwell,
- You are worried about your child.

Contact telephone numbers:

Children's Unit (for advice) – 0161 922 5252

Children's Outpatients (for appointment queries) - 0161 922 5025

If you require this leaflet to be printed in to any other language please contact the Ethnic Health team on 0161 922 5150.

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

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Source of Good Practice

References

Adapted from UHSM Mastoidectomy; Advice for parents

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