



Correction of Prominent Ears

Plastic Surgery

CORRECTION OF PROMINENT EARS OVERVIEW

Introduction

Surgery to correct prominent ears reshapes the cartilage of the ear and sets the ear back closer to the scalp. You may also see it referred to as otoplasty or pinnaplasty. In the vast majority of patients seeking prominent ear correction, the antihelical fold which is the fold of the ear that normally sits just inside the outer rim of the ear, is poorly formed or absent. Less commonly the inner bowl or conchal bowl of the ear is deeper than usual. A combination of both features may be seen and one ear may be more prominent than the other.

If you are thinking about having surgery to correct prominent ears, it is important to have an understanding not only about the procedure and the operation itself, but also about what you can realistically expect from otoplasty surgery.

This information booklet has been written with this in mind, starting with an explanation about prominent ear corrective surgery. It then goes on to describe the different options in otoplasty surgery, what to expect from them and the post-operative course. All operations carry a degree of risk, and an otoplasty is no exception. Therefore the last section deals with possible complications from otoplasty surgery and what may need to be done about them.

What should I think about prior to my consultation?

Before coming to see your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon, you should think about what you are hoping to achieve from an otoplasty. Points to consider may include:

- Why do I want my ears set back? There are a variety of reasons why you might be seeking an otoplasty consultation. In some cases, the psychological reasons may not be solved with surgery, and if your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon feels you might benefit from professional psychological input (instead of, or in addition to surgery), this will be broached during your consultation. Please do not feel offended if this happens, as it is an incredibly important part of the consultation in many cases.
- What in particular about my ears am I unhappy with? It is important to discuss this during the consultation as the planning of your otoplasty may change depending on your individual concerns.
- What changes do I want to the features of my ears that I am unhappy with?

- What are my expectations of an otoplasty operation? Realistic expectations are key to a satisfactory outcome and need to be discussed openly between you and your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon.
- Why am I thinking about having an otoplasty at this time in my life? (You should not consider having cosmetic surgery if you are undergoing any instability in your personal circumstances.)

BEFORE & AFTER



THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND AN OTOPLASTY

What are the benefits of otoplasty?

Otoplasty surgery will reshape your ears to a more pleasing shape and position. An otoplasty should result in ears that are symmetrical, that sit in a natural position at the side of the scalp and have a natural appearance. They should have a natural appearing fold. Your ears will not be set right back against the scalp as this is does not create a natural or pleasing aesthetic appearance either. Hearing is not affected by otoplasty surgery.

Otoplasty can be performed in children. This is usually done when child is concerned and distressed about their prominent ears. Some may be bullied at school about their ears. In these circumstances, it can be very appropriate to offer otoplasty surgery. Otoplasty is not done at a parent's request if the child is untroubled by their ears. The decision for surgery is a consensus reached after a full discussion and assessment by your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon.

What are the limitations of an otoplasty?

The outcome of your operation will be partly determined by shape, size and symmetry of your ears before the surgery. There are variations in the normal range of ear sizes and shapes and therefore there will be variations in individual results after surgery too.

- The ear is not generally reduced in size by the surgery rather the cartilage (the flexible skeleton of the ear that you can feel between the layers of skin) will be reshaped. Occasionally a small piece of cartilage is removed to achieve a better shape but this does not normally result in a significantly smaller ear.
- The location of the ear base is not changed; i.e. it is not moved higher or lower on the side of your head. What is changed is the shape of the protruding part of your ear and its position relative to the side of your head.
- Otoplasty surgery is not suitable for very young children as their external ears will still be developing and the surgery can affect this adversely. They also find it difficult to understand the process and to cooperate with the aftercare needed for a smooth recovery. Otoplasty surgery is not appropriate for a child who is unconcerned by their prominent ears.
- An otoplasty will not correct all developmental problems with the shape or size of the ear. If there are significant structural abnormalities or significant portions of the ear malformed or absent, ear reconstruction may be a more appropriate procedure.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SURGERY ITSELF

What options are there in otoplasty procedures?

All types of otoplasty techniques are directed towards producing the natural and balanced look described above. However, a variety of otoplasty techniques exist to achieve this goal, and whichever technique is chosen, it should be tailored to suit your individual goals and desires. To summarise what happens during the surgery; an incision is made behind the ear and the cartilage is reshaped to achieve a more pleasing shape and position. The most commonly used techniques are described below, although on occasion other variations are used to achieve the best results for an individual. A small amount of skin may be removed from behind the ear in some cases to achieve a smoother skin closure but it is not the skin that achieves the correction in ear shape and position. This is achieved by reshaping and repositioning the cartilage of the ear.

Otoplasty procedures may be done under local anaesthetic (while you are awake with the area numbed) or under general anaesthetic (while you are asleep). If having the procedure done under local anaesthetic, you may wish to have a local anaesthetic cream applied to the area one hour beforehand to start the numbing process in advance of your procedure.

Some patients may be suitable for a new minimally invasive technique where the antihelical fold is reshaped by the earFold™ implant. (See later section in booklet.)

Suture otoplasty

In this technique, the cartilage of the ear is reshaped by specially placed internal sutures on the underside of the protruding side of the ear. This is done via an incision in the crease behind the ear and the sutures create or enhance the ear fold and set the ear back. This is the most common technique used for otoplasty surgery as it is safe and very effective in most situations.

Anterior scoring otoplasty

This technique involves reshaping the cartilage by using a specific way of incising the cartilage so that it tends to bend and form the fold that is missing or deficient. It involves a more extensive dissection of the ear cartilage than the suture technique and thus a higher risk of some of the potential complications of this surgery.

While it used to be the most popular technique for prominent ear correction, it is now generally reserved for very select situations where the suture technique has failed to work or is not suitable to use.

Conchal bowl reduction

In some cases, the ear fold is normally formed but the bowl of the ear is deeper than normal and causes the ear to sit out from the scalp more than usual. In this situation a small ellipse of cartilage may be removed to allow the ear to sit back in a more pleasing position. This may be done alone or in conjunction with the suture technique described above.

Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will guide you towards the most appropriate technique for your individual circumstances.

THE CONSULTATION WITH YOUR PLASTIC SURGEON

On meeting your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon, they will endeavour to put you at ease, and start by finding out about your motivation for seeking an otoplasty. In addition to clearly establishing the various symptoms and concerns that you may have in regard to your ears, your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will take a thorough medical history, including records of any medication you may be taking and any allergies you may have. They will also ask about any history of infections, previous surgery or trauma and how you have formed scars in the past.

What does your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon examine for during the consultation?

Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will do a thorough examination of your ears from all angles. During the examination process, they will assess the size and shape of your ears and the proportions of the various components of the ear. They may measure how far your ears protrude at specific points on each side. Any asymmetries or factors, that will affect the outcome or type of surgery you may have, will be discussed with you. They may ask to see any scars that you have elsewhere on your body to assess how you normally heal.

Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will provide you with a professional and honest assessment and discuss frankly the areas that could be improved, as well as the limitations of any procedure. In some cases, they will not recommend surgery, as it will not provide the correct or best solution to the issue troubling you.

Photography

Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeons will always take pre-operative photographs from a variety of standardised views. The photographs may be used during your consultation as an aid to discussing your concerns and how they may be affected by otoplasty surgery. In addition, the photographs form an essential part of your medical records and are used for planning your otoplasty procedure. Your consent for the photographs will always be obtained.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR OTOPLASTY SURGERY

People often ask if there is anything they can do to help prepare for an otoplasty procedure. Below are a number of recommendations:

1. STOP SMOKING: Due to the high risk of wound healing complications with smoking, it is best to stop smoking for at least 2 months prior to surgery. Smoking not only significantly increases your risks of complications, but the coughing post-operatively that it will cause makes it more likely that you will bleed following the surgery.

2. AVOID ASPIRIN: Aspirin and other similar non-steroidal medicines are blood-thinning medicines that will increase the risk of bleeding complications. You should ideally stop these medications for at least 2 weeks prior to your operation. These medicines may also increase the degree of post-operative bruising. Paracetamol is safe to take.

3. AVOID VITAMIN E: Vitamin E may also increase a bleeding tendency, so it should not be taken for 2 weeks prior to surgery. Vitamin C is safe to take.

4. DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL: Alcohol increases blood flow, and therefore, the risks related to bleeding complications and bruising are increased if you drink alcohol the night before surgery. Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeons advise that no alcohol should be drunk for at least 2 days prior to surgery.

5. COLDS, FLU AND OTHER INFECTIONS: If you develop any sort of illness prior to the operation please contact your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon immediately, as you may need treatment prior to surgery, or alternatively your surgery may need to be put back.

6. WASHING YOUR HAIR: Please wash your hair and shower on the morning of surgery.

7. WHAT TO BRING TO THE CLINIC OR HOSPITAL: Please bring a headband e.g. a sports sweatband with you to the clinic or hospital. A dark colour is usually better as small spots of blood may stain it and this is less obvious on a dark colour. If you have long hair, bring a hair-tie to tie it back for surgery.

8. PLANNING FOR SURGERY: The hospital or clinic admission date and admission time will be arranged for you. You will be asked to fast for 6 hours prior to the operation (i.e. do not eat anything for 6 hours before the planned time of surgery) if you are having a general anaesthetic. Water may be drunk for up to 3 hours prior to surgery, however other drinks should be avoided. If you have any doubts or confusion, please ask. If your procedure is under local anaesthetic, you do not need to fast but may be asked to attend at least an hour in advance for the application of local anaesthetic cream.

9. LEAVING THE CLINIC OR HOSPITAL AFTER SURGERY: Please arrange for someone to accompany you and to drive you home after your procedure even if it has been done under local anaesthetic.

BEFORE & AFTER



THE OTOPLASTY PROCEDURE ITSELF

What happens when I get to hospital or clinic?

When you arrive at Purity Bridge or the hospital, a nurse will go through a detailed questionnaire assessing your health, your allergies and other relevant details (much of which will have been covered before with your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon). You will be asked to change into a hospital gown in preparation for surgery. Your anaesthetist will also visit you for an assessment prior to any planned general anaesthetic.

Do I see my Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon before my operation?

You will always see your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon before your operation. They will spend some time reviewing everything you have discussed before and make sure you have no unanswered questions or nagging worries. Once you have confirmed you are happy to go ahead, they will ask you to sign a consent form (if you have not already done so).

What does the operation involve?

Once you are carefully positioned, your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will do careful markings on your ears as part of the planning of your surgery. They will then inject your ears with a solution containing local anaesthetic and adrenaline. This helps to minimise bleeding during the operation. Once this is done, your ears will be thoroughly cleansed and sterile drapes placed around them and around your head and upper body.

The skin incisions are then made and reshaping of the ears is performed. After this is complete, the skin incisions are carefully stitched and cleaned. A small dressing will be placed in behind your ear. This may be sutured in place. Your headband will then be placed around your head covering your ears.

How long does the surgery take?

The length of time an otoplasty takes varies depending upon what technique is used and if additional procedures are being performed. The range is usually from 60 to 90 minutes. This may be longer if multiple other procedures are being performed.

Will it be painful?

Otoplasty surgery, like any operation, will produce some pain, but it is usually mild to moderate and should be relieved by painkillers. Stronger pain relief is available if required. Avoiding bending, stooping and heavy lifting will help to reduce swelling and thus pain.

What else can I expect after surgery?

It is normal that both ears are swollen and bruised. You may have a small ooze of blood from your ears for the first 24 to 48 hours post surgery. This should not be excessive and should stop of its own accord.

When will I leave hospital?

Otoplasty surgery is typically performed as day case surgery. You will get a follow-up appointment before you leave the clinic or hospital.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN I GET HOME AFTER SURGERY?

Upon leaving Purity Bridge or the hospital, an outpatient appointment will be made for you to see the nurse or your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon to have your wound reviewed, usually done at 7 – 10 days following surgery. The stitches may be absorbable and then will fall out on their own accord. If they are not absorbable, they will be removed at your first check up visit.

Dos and Don'ts after surgery

There are several rules of thumb that will help speed up your recovery from surgery:

- Take things easy & slowly after surgery particularly during the first 3 to 4 days. Gentle pottering about, no heavy lifting or jumping up and down for first 2 to 3 weeks. Restrict your normal activities (do not “over do it”). A balance between taking things easy and being up and about needs to be reached. As you recover, you will be able to increase the amount you do. This helps to minimise the amount of swelling that develops after surgery and thus your discomfort.
- Avoiding bending or stooping and keeping your head elevated as much as possible e.g. sleeping on extra pillows helps keep swelling down.
- Wear your headband 24 hours a day for as long as instructed by your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon. This varies from 48 hours to 1 week. It then needs to be worn at night for 6 weeks. This prevents your ears from being bent the wrong way while you are sleeping which can damage them in the early stages of recovery.
- Allow 6 weeks before returning to most forms of exercise
- Allow 8 weeks before returning to contact sports
- First post-operative follow-up – you will have a check up with the nurse or your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon 7 to 10 days after surgery.
- Avoid smoking, alcohol and stress, as these will all hinder the healing process.
- Analgesia or pain relief is often required at the beginning to manage the discomfort – please take painkillers regularly for the first 3 to 4 days. After this, you will still need to take painkillers but may not need them as often.
- It is important to drink plenty of fluids and eat a balanced healthy diet. Avoid aspirin, as this can increase your bruising and bleeding into the tissues.

Generally, visible bruising is present for about 2 weeks. The swelling increases over the first 48 to 72 hours following surgery, stabilises, then generally subsides slowly, but takes up to 6 weeks to fully settle. Swelling can, on occasion, take longer to fully settle. You need to be patient and give yourself time to heal.

In addition, most patients experience a roller coaster of emotions, with good days and low days. It is quite normal to have the occasional day where you think: “what have I done?” and experience feelings of guilt and low self-esteem. Fortunately, this passes quickly, especially once you resume your normal daily activities and start going out a bit more.

What is the recovery period?

As a rule, most people will have fully recovered, and be back to doing all their normal activities (including sports) by 6 weeks. For the first 1 to 2 weeks you will have to restrict your usual routines to allow yourself to recover from the effects of surgery. Between weeks 2 and 6 you will be able to increase what you do.

How long before daily activities may be resumed?

Social engagements can usually be planned by 2 to 3 weeks after surgery. Exercise should be avoided for 6 weeks after surgery. Contact sports should be avoided for 8 weeks postoperatively.

SUMMARY OF TYPICAL TIMELINE FOLLOWING OPERATION

SUMMARY OF TYPICAL TIMELINE FOLLOWING OPERATION

(this may vary on occasion)

DAY OF SURGERY

- ✓ Review in Purity Bridge or hospital by your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon for surgical planning and surgery itself

1 WEEK AFTER DISCHARGE

- ✓ Reduce activity and rest
- ✓ Regular analgesia
- ✓ Wearing of headband 24 hours a day

WEEK 1 – 2 AFTER SURGERY

- ✓ Clinic or hospital appointment with nurse or Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon for wound check +/- removal of sutures
- ✓ Wearing of headband at night

WEEK 6

- ✓ Review by your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon
- ✓ Exercise may gradually be started
- ✓ Can stop wearing headband

WEEK 8

- ✓ Contact sports can be started

BEYOND 6 WEEKS

- ✓ Longer term follow-up appointments will be arranged as needed by your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

What you need to know about the possible effects of surgery and potential complications

Before you make a decision to undergo otoplasty surgery, it is important that you are informed of the potential risks, complications and side effects. Complications may occur even with the best surgical care. For this reason, it is crucial that you carefully read and understand the following section.

After an otoplasty there are a number of side-effects that are commonly experienced, as detailed below. In addition, unwanted and unforeseen complications may also happen. These too are discussed below.

Commonly experienced side effects after otoplasty surgery

Swelling

This is normal following an otoplasty and reaches a maximum about 3 days following surgery before starting to settle down. Most swelling is gone by 6 weeks in most patients. However, swelling can persist for longer on occasion. Commonly, the swelling subsides at different rates on each side, which is quite normal, and nothing to worry about.

Alteration in skin pigmentation (discolouration and bruising)

Bruising usually comes to the surface within a few days and then gradually resolves over 2 to 3 weeks. Very occasionally extensive bruising can take many weeks to totally resolve. Patients with darker complexions should be aware of the possibility of residual brown pigment being left behind if the bruising takes a long time to settle.

Light wound discharge

It is reasonably common to have some light blood staining on the dressing or headband during the first few days after surgery. This usually settles and should not be excessive. If it persists or is more than expected, please contact the clinic or hospital in case you need to be reviewed earlier than your planned check.

Possible complications after an otoplasty

Early complications (within the first week after surgery)

Bleeding (haematoma)

If there is any suggestion that excessive bleeding after otoplasty surgery has occurred after surgery, you will need to go back to the operating theatre to have the bleeding stopped and the wound washed out to evacuate the collected blood.

Infection

Rates of severe infection in otoplasty are low. However minor wound infections or inflammation may occur - if it does happen, an infection will be treated with antibiotics. Rarely, a return to the operating theatre to wash out the wound might be required. A severe infection can damage the cartilage but these are rare.

Blood clots

Blood clots in the veins of the legs (DVT - deep venous thrombosis) are rare after otoplasty particularly when done under local anaesthetic. Preventative measures are taken (such as calf compression stockings) if you are having a general anaesthetic. If a DVT does develop, you will need various investigations and treatment as appropriate. The risk can be reduced further by drinking sufficient amounts of water postoperatively and gently mobilising.

Persistent swelling

Swelling to the ears is normal after an otoplasty operation. Most of the swelling usually resolves during the first 6 weeks after surgery. In some cases it can be more severe and persist longer than usual.

Intermediate complications (within 6 weeks after surgery)

Delayed wound healing

In some people the wounds take longer to heal than in others: this may be due to having had a mild infection of the wound, due to a reaction with the stitches or from "overdoing it" straight after surgery. Normally this is a minor inconvenience, which can be managed with observation or special dressings as an outpatient. Occasionally it can lead to a troublesome infection developing as described above.

Wound dehiscence

Occasionally some of the wound can open or gape. This is normally only a very small area and can be managed by observation and wound care. It usually does not leave any lasting problems. Rarely, the wound may need to be resutured.

Skin necrosis

This is when the skin of the ear does not tolerate the surgery well and is damaged to the extent that a small area necroses or dies. It is quite rare in otoplasty surgery but is more common if a severe infection or bleeding after the surgery has occurred. It is more common in the anterior scoring technique described in one of the earlier sections and is one of the reasons why this technique is now infrequently used.

“Telephone” deformity

This is when the upper part of the ear and the ear lobe are more prominent than the middle part of the ear after surgery resulting in the so-called telephone deformity. This may require further surgery to correct it.

Asymmetries and irregularities

While no-one is perfectly symmetrical, and no two ears are 100% symmetrical, every effort will be made to achieve good symmetry after your surgery. However, there will inevitably be subtle differences between each side. Occasionally there are significant asymmetries and irregularities that need to be addressed with further surgery (a revision operation).

Numbness or hypersensitivity

The ear skin may be numb or over sensitive in the aftermath of surgery. The feeling will normalise eventually, but can take several weeks or even months in some cases.

Late complications (after 6 weeks from surgery)

Poor scar formation

Scarring will occur whenever the skin is cut and of course, every effort is made to place scar lines where they will heal well and be least visible. Although scarring on average is minimal, scar maturation varies from person to person and occurs over 6 to 12 months, with scars passing through a red, itchy and lumpy phase, prior to settling down to thinner, softer less distinct lines. Normally the scars from otoplasty surgery are barely perceptible but sometimes (in about 1% of cases), they may tend to thicken and form hypertrophic or keloid scars.

Hypertrophic or keloid scars are thickened and lumpy scars that have healed abnormally. They are more common in people of Asian or Afro-Caribbean descent but can occur in any skin type. As well as being enlarged and lumpy, they can be itchy and painful. If you have ever made a raised or lumpy scar or had a scar that healed poorly, it is very important to tell your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon about this as it may place you at higher risk of developing a keloid or hypertrophic scar behind your ears. Should these occur, your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will discuss with you the best ways of treating them. They can be very difficult to treat although there are treatments available.

Recurrence of prominent ears

Although the effects of otoplasty surgery are permanent in most cases, a recurrence rate of up to 10% has been reported in the medical literature. This means that the ear becomes prominent again in spite of the surgery. It may be due to the internal sutures breaking due to a knock to the ear or being weakened by an infection or bleeding in the ear after surgery. Sometimes the cartilage is stronger than usual and can overpower the corrective effect of the sutures. This can be corrected by a further surgery in most cases.

The sub-optimal result

Despite performing the operation as accurately and carefully as possible, some people will feel that their result is not exactly as they were hoping it would be. This may be due to problems during the recovery or due to irregularities or asymmetries. In some cases, this unhappiness is a result of unrealistic expectations not being met; hence the importance of an understanding between you and your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon about what is realistically achievable (and not achievable) through an otoplasty. No-one can guarantee a “perfect ear” after otoplasty surgery, and an understanding of what is achievable in your particular case is essential prior to undergoing surgery.

Should you have a sub-optimal result, this will be discussed with you along with the subsequent appropriate treatment options. Treatment may include revision surgery. Extra charges may be incurred for further surgery in some circumstances and this will be discussed with you.

CORRECTION OF PROMINENT EARS WITH EARFOLD™

What is earFold™?

EarFold™ is a new, minimally invasive implant developed to reshape the cartilage of ears to create a fold and correct prominent ears. It is a very thin, curved metal implant made of nitinol (nickel and titanium) and plated with 24 carat gold. It is an alternative to traditional otoplasty surgery for some patients.

What are the advantages of earFold™ over standard otoplasty surgery techniques?

EarFold™ is placed through smaller incisions and is a much quicker procedure than standard otoplasty techniques. It will leave a much smaller scar that is usually barely noticeable. It is usually very well tolerated under local anaesthetic and because it is less invasive surgery, there is less swelling and bruising afterwards.

You are able to see how much correction and change earFold™ can do for your ears beforehand as preFold positioners will be used during your preoperative consultations to determine where the implants will be placed and how many implants will be used.

Who is suitable for earFold™?

Patients wishing for correction of prominent ears, who are aged over 7 years of age and whose ear prominence is primarily or mostly due to a poorly formed antihelical fold (the fold of the ear that sits just inside the outer rim of the ear), may be suitable candidates for earFold™.

What will happen at the preoperative consultation?

During your pre-operative consultations, your suitability for an earFold™ procedure would be determined. Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will seek to understand why you wish to change your ears, the changes that you wish to make and details of your general medical health, medications, allergies as well as your history of scarring and smoking. They will examine both of your ears and then explain your options to you.

If they determine that you are suitable for earFold™ implants instead of otoplasty surgery, your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will then use preFold implant positioners to determine positioning of permanent implant placement and the number of implants required. These are small curved pieces of metal of the same size and shape as the permanent earFold™ implant. They are placed on your ear(s) to create the

antihelical fold and determine the degree of correction that earFold™ will offer you. You will be able to view the placement and adjustment of the preFold positioners during the consultation. Photographs (with your written consent) will be taken of your ears from several angles both before the preFold positioners are placed and once the optimal position and number of implants are determined. These photographs form part of your medical record and are used for planning your surgery and monitoring your results.

Usually a single earFold™ implant is used per ear but about 25% of people have 2 implants per ear placed and very occasionally 3 implants per ear are used.

What will happen during the procedure itself?

EarFold™ is carried out under local anaesthetic. When you arrive at the clinic, a nurse will go over routine preoperative checks with you. Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will then see you and go through a consent form with you.

After this, your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will again place the preFold positioners on your ears in the locations agreed upon at your preoperative consultations. You will be asked to check this in a mirror. Once these checks are done, further photographs may be taken. The position of the implants will be marked and the preFold positioners will be removed.

Your ears will then be numbed with local anaesthetic injections. Your ears will be carefully cleaned and sterile drapes placed. Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will perform the procedure through small incisions (<1 cm) on the front of your ear. You will be aware that there is touching and movement of your ear but it will not be painful. Sounds may appear louder than usual due to the proximity of the surgery to your ear. Once the implants are placed, your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will place an absorbable stitch in each incision and cover it with a paper tape.

The procedure takes between 20 and 45 minutes to perform depending on the number of earFold™ implants to be placed.

How should I look after my ears after earFold™?

-  Do not smoke.
-  Use painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen regularly for 2 to 3 days post procedure or until your ears are no longer sore.

- Co-amoxiclav or equivalent antibiotics will be prescribed for you.
- You may shower and wash your hair from the following day but please do not scrub your ears. Let water run gently over your ears and pat them dry gently afterwards.
- Sleep on your back on extra pillows to help keep swelling down. You may find a travel pillow or a head-band helpful.
- Avoid sporting or strenuous activities including swimming for 4 weeks.
- Take care using a mobile phone against your ears for 3 weeks. Hold it a little away from your ear and clean the screen with a disinfectant wipe before use.
- Avoid wearing earrings for 2 weeks.
- If you have any problems during the postoperative period, please contact the clinic using the instructions given to you before leaving afterwards.

What should I expect after earFold™?

You will have some soreness and discomfort afterwards as with any surgical procedure. This is usually manageable with regular painkillers as described above. There will be some swelling and bruising of your ears around the implants. This is usually not excessive and will settle over time. There may be a small amount of ooze from the incision sites over the first few days — again this should not be excessive and will settle. There will be some sensitivity around the implant for a while until the tissues settle.

When will I be seen afterwards and how often?

You will be seen by a nurse at 1 week for a wound review and by your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon at 2 weeks, 6 weeks and 1 year following your procedure. Of course, if you need to be seen at a different time because of a concern, an additional review will be arranged.

Does the earFold™ implant need to be removed in the future?

No, the earFold™ is a permanent implant. It can be removed if necessary in the future but no removal is planned.

BEFORE & AFTER



Before



PreFold in place



After earFold™



Before



PreFold in place



After earFold™



Before



PreFold in place



After earFold™

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

Possible risks and complications of the earFold™ procedure

In general, there is a very low rate of problems after earFold™ implant placement. But as with any surgical procedure, there are some potential risks.

Early complications (within 1 week of surgery)

Bleeding

Bleeding is usually very minimal with earFold™ but if persistent or building up under the skin as a haematoma, you may need to return to the procedure room to have it stopped.

Infection

The infection rate is low with earFold™ and you will be placed on a short course of antibiotics as a preventative measure. If you get an infection, you will require further antibiotics. If the infection does not resolve quickly, the implant may need to be removed.

Intermediate complications (within 6 weeks of surgery)

Skin necrosis

Damage to the skin overlying the implant is very rare. Not smoking will reduce this risk further. If it happens, the skin may be slow to heal and the implant may need to be removed. The residual scar may be bigger than otherwise anticipated.

Late complications (after 6 weeks from surgery)

Prolonged sensitivity

It is common to have sensitivity around the implants during the recovery period. It usually resolves gradually but occasionally may persist for longer than expected.

Poor scar

Most scars following this procedure heal very well and are barely perceptible. Occasionally someone will make a raised or lumpy hypertrophic or keloid scar and further treatment may be required for this.

Visible or palpable implant

EarFold™ implants are very thin and are designed to be invisible and not to be palpable under the skin once placed. If this is not the case, the implant may need to be removed and replaced.

Extrusion

Occasionally an implant placed underneath the skin will work its way out. If this is picked up, the implant may need to be removed and replaced.

Recurrence

There is currently a very low rate of recurrence with earFold™, lower than that of standard otoplasty. If it happens, the procedure may need to be repeated or a standard otoplasty performed.

Undercorrection

EarFold™ gives predictable results, which will be discussed with you during your preoperative consultations. The preFold positioners are used both for your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon to plan your surgery and for you to see the predicted results. If undercorrection occurs then the procedure can be repeated or a standard otoplasty performed.

Overcorrection

Again this is rare with earFold™ due to the use of preFold positioners preoperatively. If it occurs, your options to correct it will be discussed with you including removal with or without replacement of the implants.

The sub-optimal result

Despite performing the operation as accurately and carefully as possible, some people will feel that their result is not exactly as they were hoping it would be. This may be due to problems during the recovery or due to irregularities or asymmetries. In some cases, this unhappiness is a result of unrealistic expectations not being met; hence the importance of an understanding between you and your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon about what is realistically achievable (and not achievable) through an earFold™ procedure. No one can guarantee the “perfect ear” after ear surgery, and an understanding of what is achievable in your particular case is essential prior to undergoing surgery. Should you be left with a sub-optimal result, this will be discussed with you along with the subsequent appropriate treatment options. Treatment may include revision surgery. Extra charges may be incurred for further surgery in some circumstances and this will be discussed with you.

CONCLUSIONS

By reshaping and repositioning the ears, an otoplasty or earFold™ procedure can have a very beneficial effect for your symptoms and confidence. We hope this information booklet has helped you. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

BEFORE & AFTER



Other Procedures Offered at Purity Bridge

Facial procedures

Eyelid lift

A blepharoplasty is an excellent operation to brighten up and refresh the eye area in a very natural way. It is hard to tell that someone has had an eyelid lift, apart from seeing how refreshed and well they look!

Rhinoplasty

Nose reshaping can be done to reduce a dorsal hump, address deviations and asymmetries as well as refine the nasal tip. Each nose is different, and each face is different, so the transformation of your nose must be tailored to your individual goals and what is achievable. Nose reshaping can have an incredibly positive impact on people's self esteem and self-consciousness.

Ear correction

A number changes can be made to reshape and reposition ears — these include correction of prominent ears, reshaping of earlobes and correcting split earlobes. Our Purity Bridge specialists usually carry out these operations under local anaesthetic as “office-based” procedures, allowing a quick recovery and excellent result.

Facelift

A facelift remains the gold standard facial rejuvenation procedure. The expert Consultant Plastic Surgeons at Purity Bridge regularly perform a variety of types of facelift — each designed to be bespoke for the individual patient. A facelift should not look pulled or tight, but natural and refreshed.

Breast procedures

Breast enlargement

Breast augmentation enhances a woman's natural breast volume and can restore fullness lost after breast feeding or weight loss. This can be done using a carefully chosen high quality breast implant or using your own fat. A specific plan would be made with you to create the most natural outcome with the least downtime and a long lasting result.

Breast lift

A mastopexy (breast lift) raises the nipple, tightens the breast skin, reduces the size of the areola, restores lost volume to the upper part of the breast and overall produces a perkier and more youthful breast shape. Breast implants can also be used in a breast lift to enhance the volume if needed. This is particularly popular after having children or losing weight.

Nipple surgery

Surgery to modify nipples is usually simple to do under a local anaesthetic as an outpatient procedure. Inverted nipples can be corrected; nipples can be reshaped and even reconstructed after removal for breast cancer treatment.

Body procedures

Liposuction

Liposuction is an ever popular procedure to remove excess fat deposits using tiny incisions. Areas of the body, including chest abdomen, arms, legs and neck, can be re-contoured to create better proportions. It is a body contouring procedure, rather than a weight loss procedure.

Tummy tuck

An abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) is a very popular procedure to re-contour the abdomen, frequently in people after weight loss, or in women to correct the effect of pregnancy. Excess skin and fat is trimmed from the lower belly, and also stretched abdominal muscles are re-tightened to create a flatter, smoother abdominal contour.

Labiaplasty

Labiaplasty is a very personal procedure that reshapes and trims excess labia minora (inner vaginal lips). It is usually performed as an outpatient procedure under local anaesthetic. The results are very natural and the scars are very hard to see.

Lipofilling (fat grafting)

Using fat as a natural filling material has revolutionised approaches to a wide variety of body areas, such as the face, around the eyes and the breasts. Lipofilling is a versatile technique that has a number of applications and is frequently used by our team.

Many other procedures are performed by our specialist team of Consultant Plastic Surgeons at Purity Bridge including:

- Arm lifts
- Thigh lifts
- Body lifts
- Body contouring after massive weight loss
- Breast reduction
- Correction of breast asymmetry
- Breast reconstruction
- Brow lifts
- Facial implants
- Facial bone reshaping and repositioning
- Skin cancer treatment
- Skin lesion excision



CONTACT

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