WATERFRONT
PRIVATE HOSPITAL

PATIENT INFORMATION · AFTERCARE

Ear Correction (Pinnaplasty) Aftercare

Recovery guidance following ear correction surgery (pinnaplasty / otoplasty) to set back prominent ears, based on Waterfront Private Hospital's patient information. This online guide should be used alongside the specific instructions given to you by your surgical team.

Typical recovery: Stitches removed at 5–10 days; tenderness for several weeks · Reviewed 4 July 2026 · Version 1.0

When to get help — your traffic light guide

RED

Call 999 or go to A&E now if you have:

These can be life-threatening. Do not wait to call the hospital first.

- High temperature (over 38°C) with confusion or unusual drowsiness

AMBER

Contact us now — do not wait — if you have:

- Increasing pain, redness or swelling of the ears
- Discharge or signs of infection
- Fever
- Bleeding from the wound

Office hours (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm): 0131 376 3785

Evenings and weekends during your early recovery: Out-of-Hours Nurse Advice Line 07405322689 — our nurse can advise you, contact your surgeon, or direct you to NHS services.

After your early recovery period: call the hospital in office hours, or NHS 24 on 111.

Had your surgery at Spire Shawfair Park (overnight stay)? Contact Spire directly using the number on your discharge paperwork — not the Waterfront advice line.

GREEN

Tell us at your next appointment:

- A break in the skin where the dressing has rubbed that is not healing

Anything else that is niggling or worrying you — no concern is too small. Mention it at your next appointment, or call us during office hours.

Related Information Leaflets

Separate leaflets about the procedure itself — not the aftercare instructions above. Tap a title to download, or find them all on your procedure page in the portal.

- Pinnaplasty — Patient Information (https://waterfront-patient-portal.netlify.app/waterfrontaftercare/pinnaplasty_patient_leaflet.pdf)

How to Use This Information

The advice below is based on Waterfront Private Hospital's pinnaplasty patient information. It is general guidance and may be adapted by your consultant for your individual circumstances.

Always follow the specific instructions given to you on the day of surgery. If there is ever a difference, follow your consultant's written or verbal instructions and contact us for clarification.

Post-Operative Checklist

- Pain relief (Paracetamol or Codeine) collected
- Soft, loose headband ready for night-time use
- Follow-up appointment (around 5–10 days) arranged
- Emergency numbers saved to phone

Wound Care

- A small protective dressing is usually worn for the first 5–10 days. Depending on your surgeon's technique you may have dissolving stitches, or stitches that are removed at around this time
- After the dressing comes off, a soft, loose headband (a sports/tennis headband works well) worn at night helps stop the ears being bent forward against the pillow while they settle — most surgeons suggest around 4 weeks at night; there is no benefit in wearing it tightly or for months
- Keep the grooves behind the ears clean
- Your hair can be washed once the dressing is off and your team confirms the wounds are ready

Pain Management

- The ears are often sore and tender for several weeks
- Take paracetamol and ibuprofen as prescribed — they can safely be taken together

Activity Restrictions

- A soft, loose headband at night (around 4 weeks) protects the ears while they settle — your surgical team will advise what is right for you
- Take care not to bend the ears forward against a pillow
- Returning to sport depends on the sport: non-contact activity can usually resume within a few weeks, and contact sports usually around 6 weeks — longer for rugby, martial arts or boxing. Follow your surgical team's advice

Before You Go Home

Before you leave, the nurse looking after you will make sure you have everything you need, including:

- Your painkillers — the nurse looking after you will go through them with you
- Soft, loose headband ready for night-time use
- Stitch-removal appointment (5–10 days) arranged
- Aware to avoid Aspirin and Nurofen
- Transport home arranged
- Emergency numbers saved to phone

Your Recovery, Stage by Stage

Days 1–10 — Dressing & Stitches

Protective dressing worn until stitches are removed

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Soreness and tenderness of the ears
- Some numbness of the ears
- Dressing in place

CARE ROUTINE

- Keep the protective dressing in place and dry
- Attend your appointment for stitch removal (5–10 days)
- Take paracetamol and ibuprofen as prescribed

COMFORT

- Regular pain relief (paracetamol and ibuprofen as prescribed)

After dressing removal — Early Healing

Protecting the ears while they settle

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Ears remain tender for several weeks
- Numbness gradually settles

CARE ROUTINE

- Soft, loose headband at night (around 4 weeks)
- Keep the grooves behind the ears clean
- Hair can be washed once the dressing is off and wounds are ready

COMFORT

- Pain relief as needed
- Tenderness improves over several weeks

Follow-Up Appointments

Week 1 — nurse appointment — Wound check, dressing care and any suture removal; a chance to ask questions about your recovery.

Further nurse reviews — as needed — Some patients need further nurse reviews. If so, the nurses will arrange these with you and will discharge you from nurse-led care once they are happy your wounds have healed.

Around 6 months — surgeon review (final follow-up) — Your surgeon will usually see you at around 6 months to assess your final result. Your surgeon is always available to review you sooner if required, and in some circumstances may wish to see you before your final follow-up.

Your appointment schedule may vary. Always follow the specific dates and times given in your appointment card. Contact us if you need to reschedule.

Frequently Asked Questions

When are the stitches removed?

A small protective dressing is usually worn for the first 5–10 days. You may have dissolving stitches that do not need removal, or stitches that are removed at around this time — your team will tell you which.

Will my ears feel normal afterwards?

The ears are often a little numb after the procedure, and this usually takes several weeks to settle. They can also be sore and tender for several weeks.

What are the risks?

In a small number of patients (around 3%) the scars can become thick and red and may need further treatment. Infection is uncommon but, if it occurs, would need antibiotics and regular dressing changes. Occasionally the repair may not hold fully and a further minor adjustment is required.

Can the scar be seen?

The operation is carried out from behind the ears, so a small scar is left close to the groove between the ear and the side of the head. It usually settles well, though on rare occasions it can become red and lumpy.