



Information for  
patients and  
carers

## Mastoidectomy

## Why have a Mastoidectomy?

- Your child may have an ear discharge that is not settling
- The hearing may be reduced
- Your child may have painless discharge
- Your child may complain of feeling dizzy
- The doctor may suspect that a 'cholesteatoma' is present

## What is a Cholesteatoma?

- It is an abnormality where the skin on the outside of the eardrum grows inwards
- Normally the skin of the eardrum cleans itself by carrying wax debris with it to the outer ear
- However, in this case the eardrum is pulled inwards and a pocket of debris occurs which cannot be moved to the outer ear and becomes infected
- The cholesteatoma can erode the 3 little bones of hearing in the middle ear causing deafness
- It can damage the facial nerve causing paralysis of half of the face
- It can erode into the inner ear causing complete deafness
- In extreme cases it can erode into the brain causing meningitis and a brain abscess

## Before the operation

- Your child will have a hearing test to confirm their state of hearing
- Your child may have a scan to indicate the extent of the cholesteatoma

## The operation

- The skin is either cut behind the ear or up from the ear canal in front of the ear
- The mastoid bone behind the ear is opened using a drill

- The cholesteatoma is carefully removed from the surrounding structures
- The back wall of the ear canal may need to be removed
- The eardrum may need to be repaired using a graft of tissue from behind the ear
- An atticotomy may be performed-this is where the cholesteatoma is removed but the back wall of the ear canal is left intact
- The ear canal may be widened to improve access into the mastoid cavity
- The cavity and ear canal are packed with a yellow gauze dressing to allow healing without scar tissue narrowing the ear canal

## The risks of surgery

- The surgery is very safe and problems are unlikely to occur
- A microscope is used to carefully identify all the structures
- The areas where the cholesteatoma is removed may be damaged due to the surgery
- Hearing may be reduced because damaged ear bones have had to be removed
- Inner ear damage affecting hearing or balance is rare
- Weakness of the muscles in the face due to facial nerve damage is a very rare occurrence
- If the cavity remains moist or discharges, revision surgery may be needed
- Cavity care may be a lifelong need

## After surgery

- The bandage around the head will be removed the next day
- Your child may have to stay overnight in hospital
- Your child may feel dizzy
- Painkillers will be given as required, your nurse will advise

## Caring for your child at home

- Keep the ears dry
- The yellow packing will be removed 3-4 weeks in the clinic or under general anaesthetic
- Do not let your child remove the packing, a cotton wool ball can be placed over the packing and renewed twice a day
- If the packing comes out just cut it near to the ear, do not pull it
- The skin stitches are dissolvable
- Expect some oozing but any fresh blood should be reported to ward 8
- If ear discharge continues antibiotics may be given
- No blowing of nose
- Avoid exertion, contact sports and flying for 4-6 weeks
- No swimming until the doctor advises
- No school for 2 weeks
- Regular follow up, cleaning of the cavity is required and hearing test when the cavity has healed

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:  
Ward 8 on telephone number **01772 522245** or **07783848196**

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

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Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

**Cantonese:**

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

**Gujarati:**

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઈચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

**Hungarian:**

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

**Polish:**

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

**Punjabi:**

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

**Urdu:**

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

**Department:** Paediatrics  
**Division:** Women and Children  
**Production date:** October 2020  
**Review date:** October 2023  
**JR552 v1**