



South Infirmary-Victoria University Hospital

Mastoidectomy

Your Questions Answered

Patient Information Leaflet

What is a mastoidectomy?

Mastoidectomy is a surgical procedure performed to remove the Cholesteatoma from the middle ear and the mastoid. Cholesteatoma is skin trapped in the wrong place, within the middle ear or the bone behind your ear. It causes infection, discharge, and some hearing loss. It is not a tumor but can cause significant problems due to its erosive and expansive nature.

Why do I need this procedure?

If untreated, cholesteatoma leads to significant problems and complications like hearing loss, discharging ear, vertigo, facial nerve paralysis with weakness of half of your face, infection, meningitis, or brain abscess.

How would I know if I have cholesteatoma?

Your surgeon will diagnose your ear condition by assessing it. A computerized tomography (CT) scan will be required to review the extent of the disease and anatomy. A hearing test will also be performed. Following these tests, you will meet with the surgeon to discuss the procedure and potential complications.

On the day of your surgery or the night before, you will be admitted to the hospital. You will have the chance to meet with the surgical team and an anesthetist. The surgeon will go over the procedure again and address any concerns or questions you may have. The surgery will be done under general anesthesia and typically takes 2 to 4 hours. The purpose of this surgery is to remove all of the cholesteatoma, not to improve your hearing. Typically, patients stay in the hospital for 1 to 2 days following the procedure.

During the procedure, a small area of hair behind your ear will be shaved, and a cut will be made to remove the cholesteatoma. The wound will then be closed using either stitches or staples, which will be removed by your GP or surgeon for small children. A dressing will be put in place in the ear canal for three weeks, and a head bandage will be worn overnight.

Possible complications

Before giving consent to this treatment, it's important to know about the possible complications. Although rare, risks do exist.

Loss of hearing:

In a small number of patients, the hearing may be further impaired due to damage to the ear. If the disease has eroded into the inner ear, there may be total loss of hearing in that ear.

Dizziness:

Dizziness is common for a few hours following mastoid surgery and may result in nausea and vomiting. On rare occasions, dizziness is prolonged.

Tinnitus:

Sometimes the patient may notice noise in the ear, in particular if the hearing loss worsens.

Weakness of the face:

The nerve that controls the movement of the muscles in the face runs inside the ear and may be damaged during the operation, but this risk is rare. If it happens, the face may lose its movement on one side but it is usually temporary.

Allergic reaction to the ear dressings:

Some patients may develop a skin reaction to the ear dressings. If your ear becomes itchy or swollen, you should seek advice from your surgeon.

How to waterproof ears

When you shower, a small piece of cotton wool soaked in Vaseline or olive oil should be gently placed into the outer ear to ensure a waterproof seal and removed afterward.

Activity

Do not do any heavy lifting, straining, or vigorous activity for 3 weeks following the surgery.

Dizziness may occur after the surgery and usually resolves within a few weeks.

DO not fly for 6 weeks post-surgery.

You can return to work in 2 weeks following surgery.

There may be a small amount of discharge from the ear canal. This usually comes from the ear dressings.

Diet

You can eat a regular diet post-surgery if you feel well, with no restrictions.

Pain

Pain is usually mild to moderate in the first 24 hours, then it will decrease. You can take paracetamol home as required.

We hope this leaflet is useful to you. If you have further questions, please ask the nurse/doctor.

If you experience **extreme Pain or Bleeding**, please contact our **Emergency department**, your GP, or the nearest Emergency department.

South Infirmary-Victoria University Hospital Emergency department opening hours:

24 hours /7 days

Phone nr 021 4926100