

What is mastoid surgery?

The mastoid bone, part of the skull, lies right behind the ear lobe. Sometimes the cells of the mastoid bone, and/or the small bones (ossicles) inside the ear, are destroyed by chronic infection or a growth (cholesteatoma). When this happens, the affected mastoid cells may need to be removed (mastoidectomy). The small bones may also need to be replaced.

Your doctor will explain the particulars of your child's surgery to you. If you have any concerns or questions, discuss them openly with the doctor or clinic nurse. At BCCH we believe parents are our partners in caring for a child. We want to share what we know about your child's condition with you and have you share what you know about it with us.

Note: No blood transfusions are needed for this surgery.

Preparing for surgery

- Wash your child's hair the night before the operation.
- Please make sure you ask for these two pamphlets from the clinic nurse so you can help your child prepare:

"Coming to Day Care or Admit Day of Surgery"

"Helping your Child Manage Medical and Surgical Procedures"

- "Family Issues", the newsletter about the hospital, is also available. If they are not in the clinic, you can pick these up from the Family Resource Library of the hospital or call 604-875-2345, local 5102.

After the surgery

- Your child will have a large dressing over the ear, with gauze wrapped around the head to hold the dressing in place. It may feel a little itchy. Please **DO NOT LET YOUR CHILD POKE ANYTHING UNDER THE DRESSING**. The dressing will be removed the next day in the hospital, or ENT Clinic, or at your family doctor's office.
- The ear canal will be "packed" with a dressing. You may notice a damp, pinkish mark on the bandage – this is normal drainage from the surgery.
- The doctor will prescribe medication to relieve any discomfort.
- Encourage your child to have lots to drink after the surgery.

- She may be more comfortable sleeping on the unoperated side.

Home Care

If you plan to travel home by plane please check with your doctor before making final arrangements. There is usually no problem.

Care of the ear

- **KEEP THE EAR DRY**. Do not wash your child's hair for 10 days after surgery.
- Make sure you wash your hands very well before doing any ear care or putting eardrops into the ear.
- Clean only the outside of the ear using a clean, damp (not wet) washcloth. **NO COTTON SWABS!**
- Squeeze antibiotic ointment onto a clean cotton ball and push gently into the opening of the ear. Change this every day. If the packing starts to fall out, just trim it with clean scissors. Do not pull the rest of the packing out yourself.

Activities

- When you first get home, allow your child to rest. Provide quiet play activities until he feels ready to return to normal.
- Your child can return to school after one week.
- No swimming, rough play/contact sports until the doctor says the ear is healed. This could take as long as three to four months. Check with your doctor.

Call your doctor if your child has:

- a lot of pain and it is not relieved by the medication;
- a fever higher than 100-102 F (37.8-38.8 C);
- headache, dizziness, swollen face or lopsided smile;
- a dressing/packing that smells bad or looks bright red.

Follow up

The doctor will see your child:

- one week after the surgery to remove the packing from the ear canal – there may also be some stitches to remove;
- every two to four weeks after this to clean the ear.

Please call the Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) clinic secretary to make the appointments at 604-875-2113. Feel free to contact the ENT Clinic nurse with questions or concerns.

*Developed by the health care professionals
of the ENT Department with assistance
from the Department of Learning &
Development*

PE# 324 © March 2005

Mastoid Surgery



An agency of the Provincial
Health Services Authority

4480 Oak Street, Vancouver B.C., V6H 3V4
604-875-2345