

MASTOIDECTOMY

Patient and Family Information

What is a mastoidectomy?

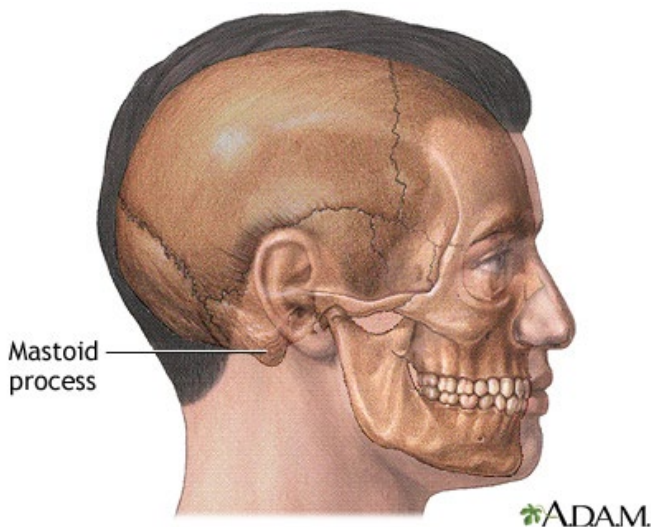


Image Source: <https://medlineplus.gov/>

A mastoidectomy is a type of surgery to remove the bone in the air-filled space behind the ear within the mastoid bone. These cells are called mastoid air cells.

Why do I need this surgery?

The main purpose of this surgery is to treat an infection or disease in the mastoid air cells. In some cases, the condition may start out in the ear and spread to the mastoid bone.

Common diseases treated with this surgery include:

- Cholesteatoma
- Complications of an ear infection
- Infections of the mastoid bone
- Placing implants (e.g. Cochlear implant)

What does this surgery involve?

The surgery is performed under general anaesthesia.

There are two surgical methods to approach the mastoid bone: an endoscopic surgery (through the ear canal), or open surgery (through an incision which is usually behind the ear). Your doctor will advise on the appropriate method which is the most suitable for you. Occasionally, it may start as an endoscopic procedure but converted to an open surgery due to access difficulties.

Typically, the diseased area will be removed with a drill. If the disease involves the middle ear, the “hearing bones” may be removed during the surgery as well. This may or may not be appropriate to be reconstructed during the initial surgery.

If a tissue graft is required after the removal of the disease, the tissue may be harvested from under your skin. The location of where this tissue is harvested from depends on the surgical method. Subsequently, dressings are placed in the external ear canal which will block off the ear canal.

You may also have an external dressing and head bandage applied at the end of the operation.

What are the risks associated with this surgery?

There are potential complications associated with any surgery. This may pertain to the administration of general anaesthesia or the surgical procedure itself.

Some potential complications include:

- Pain
- Wound infection
- Dizziness
- Recurrence of the disease

- Hearing loss — There is a small risk of partial or total permanent hearing loss as a result of damage to the middle or inner ear.
- Ringing sound in ears (tinnitus)
- Change in taste — The nerve that transmit sensation of taste runs closely behind the ear drum and may be damaged.
- Facial weakness/paralysis — The nerve that controls movement on one side of the face runs in the middle ear and may rarely be damaged.
- Cerebrospinal fluid (brain fluid) leak

What are the alternative options?

Depending on your condition, there may be an option of conservative management with regular surveillance, ear cleaning, and antibiotics.

A conservative approach is not recommended if there are complications from the disease or if the disease is extensive.

What can I expect immediately after surgery?

If you have undergone an endoscopic surgery, you will be discharged on the same day.

If you have undergone an open surgery, you will be observed in the hospital overnight. There will be a pressure bandage applied around the head over the ear after the surgery which will be removed the next day.

After the surgery, it is important to keep the operated ear dry. There will be some sponge-like material packing in the ear which will be removed during an outpatient follow-up one week later.

Subsequent follow-up sessions will be arranged to check that the wound and tissues are healing well.

Post-operative care

- Do not dig the ears (e.g. using cotton buds)
- Do not touch the inner ear pack dressing as it should only be removed by the doctor during the scheduled appointment
- The outer cotton ball can be replaced if needed
- Do not strain or blow the nose forcefully
- No swimming, diving or airplane travel until the doctor advises to do so
- Refrain from using earphones

Should you have any pre- or post-operation queries, please call us at 6772 4551 or email us at ent_fc@nuhs.edu.sg.

For urgent medical attention, please walk into the clinic during operating hours (Monday to Friday, between 8.30am to 5:30pm) or visit the Emergency Department after clinic hours.

Reference:

- <https://www.mountsinai.org/health-library/surgery/mastoidectomy>

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