

# Bone anchoring hearing aid (BAHA) surgery: aftercare advice

## Information for patients from Day Surgery

You have had bone anchoring hearing aid (BAHA) surgery. This leaflet explains how you should care for your surgical wound at home and when your hearing aid will be fitted. If after reading this leaflet you have any further questions or concerns, please contact Rotary Ward at William Harvey Hospital (see contact numbers on page 3).

### What does the operation involve?

Fitting the BAHA is a two-step process. Firstly, the bone anchored device is fitted by your surgeon. Then a few weeks later an audiologist will fit a sound processor.

### How will I feel after my operation?

You may be in a small amount of pain following your operation. You can take regular over the counter painkillers, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, to help with this.

If the pain is too much you should telephone Rotary Ward at William Harvey Hospital (see contact details on page 3) or contact your GP.

### Can I drive home after my surgery?

If you have had a general anaesthetic you will not be able to drive for 24 hours. Please arrange for someone to take you home after your operation.

### Do I need to keep my wound site dry?

Yes, you will need to keep your wound site clean and dry for one week.

### When will my stitches be removed?

Your wound dressing, healing cap, and stitches are removed by the ENT (ear, nose, and throat) nurse practitioner at your follow-up appointment one week after your surgery.



## How should I care for the abutement after surgery?

- You must clean the skin inside and around your abutement each day with a baby wipe. Skin debris may build up in these areas, so it is important that you remove it. If you experience continued soreness, pus, or inflammation around the abutement, please speak to your GP for advice.
- Check that the abutement is firm (it does not move around when touched). You can do this yourself or ask the Audiology Clinic to help you at your routine appointment; usually six months after surgery. The abutement must be firm, for both hygiene (to avoid infection) and acoustic (to get the best sound) reasons.
- An abutement cover is included in the kit you are given after surgery. This cover can be attached to the abutement when the sound processor is not in place. Simply press the cover on to the abutement.

## Can I wear the sound processor?

Yes, but not until you have healed following surgery. The sound processor can be worn while you are awake, except for when you are having a shower, swimming, or doing a physical activity that might damage it. You must not wear it in the rain without an umbrella. Make sure you turn the sound processor off when you are not using it, to save the battery.

## When will my BAHA hearing aid be fitted?

An appointment will be made for you to have your BAHA hearing device fitted by an audiologist around four weeks after your surgery (once the titanium screws have fused with your temporal bone).

## What are the possible complications?

- **Tenderness and numbness at the operation site**
  - This normally resolves soon after the operation with careful self-cleaning and painkillers. Please contact the Rotary Ward if this continues.
  - This will be monitored at your follow-up appointments.
- **Skin healing problems around the implant**
  - Occasionally the skin surrounding the implant overgrows; this can normally be treated using creams and cauterization.
  - This is monitored at your follow-up appointments by the ENT nurse practitioner.
  - If they notice any possible signs of infection such as redness or swelling you may be started on a short course of antibiotics.
- **Failure of the implant to integrate with the bone, or loss of the implant from infection or trauma**
  - This is a rare complication and usually results from trauma to the site.
  - If you notice your implant falling out or becoming loose, please contact Rotary Ward. You may need further surgery.
- **Infection at the operation site**
  - This is another rare complication.
  - If you begin to feel feverish (hot) or notice increasing pain at the site of your operation this may be a sign of infection. If this happens, please contact Rotary Ward or come to the hospital.

## Will I have a follow-up appointment?

Routine follow-up appointments will be made with an ENT nurse practitioner and audiologist, until we decide that you no longer need them.

## When can I return to work?

You can usually return to work one week after your surgery. Please ask a member of staff if you need a sick certificate.

## Contact details

- Should you have any **concerns about your wound site or the bone anchored screw**, please contact Rotary Ward at William Harvey Hospital.
- Following the fitting of the processor if you have **concerns that it is not working correctly**, please contact the Audiology Department at William Harvey Hospital.
- If you have any **questions about your operation** before the day of surgery, please contact Rotary Ward at William Harvey Hospital. They will be happy to answer questions or contact your consultant if they cannot provide an answer.
- **Useful numbers**
  - ENT secretaries, William Harvey Hospital Telephone: 01227 86 86 86
  - Rotary Ward, William Harvey Hospital Telephone: 01233 61 62 61
  - Audiology Department, Kent and Canterbury Hospital Telephone: 01227 86 42 52
  - Channel Day Surgery, William Harvey Hospital, Ashford Telephone: 01233 61 62 63  
(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)