



Bone Anchored Hearing Aid

Traditional Bone Conduction Hearing Aids have a number of drawbacks. They can be uncomfortable and rather cumbersome, by the spring-loaded arm of a spectacle aid. Headaches and soreness of the skin caused by the pressure from the vibrator against the skull are common problems along with keeping the headband on the head and in the correct position.

The Bone Anchored Hearing Aid uses the principle of osseointegration (bonding with the bone) to overcome these problems by attaching the aid to a small titanium screw which is implanted behind the ear.



Surgical procedure and treatment

The surgery is normally carried out in two stages and can be done under either local or general anaesthetic. Both operations are minor and take between 45 minutes and 1 hour to perform.

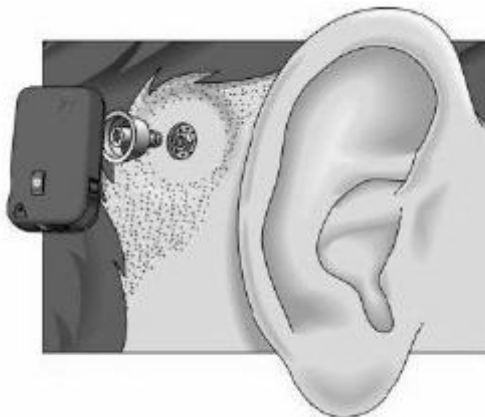
Stage One

During this operation a small titanium screw 3-4mm long is implanted into the bone directly behind the ear. This screw is called an implant or fixture. The side chosen for the implant is usually the side with the best bone conduction but this is discussed with the doctor before the operation, as there may be other considerations to be taken into account.

Stage Two

After 3-4 months the implant will have securely bonded with the bone. The second operation will now be carried out during which a titanium sleeve or abutment is connected to the implant through the skin. It is the abutment which

provides the direct connection between the hearing aid and the implant. (Note: for adults in some cases the two stages may be combined into one procedure.)



What Happens Next?

The site of the surgery has to be dressed and cleaned in the outpatients clinic on a regular basis for at least two weeks after the second operation.

Approximately one month after the second operation the hearing aid can be fitted. (In the case of a one-stage surgical procedure there will be a slightly longer time between the surgery and the fitting of the hearing aid.)

The hearing aid is fitted by the Audiologist after an initial check-up by the Doctor. At the first fitting the Audiologist will ensure that the patient is familiar with the volume and tone controls and will show how to connect and disconnect the hearing aid from the abutment.

Routine audiological tests follow after a few weeks and regular check-ups take place initially after 4-6 months and then every 6-12 months.

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