

## ENT08lite Surgery for Cholesteatoma

Expires end of December 2019

A more detailed version of this procedure specific information sheet is available. Please ask your health practitioner at Joondalup Health Campus for a copy.

**Write questions or notes here:**

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This document will give you information about surgery for a cholesteatoma. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

### What is a cholesteatoma?

A cholesteatoma is where a sac of dead skin cells forms in a pocket in your middle ear. The cholesteatoma will slowly get larger and eventually fill your middle ear and mastoid bone (see figure 1). The cholesteatoma can cause an unpleasant-smelling discharge and loss of hearing.

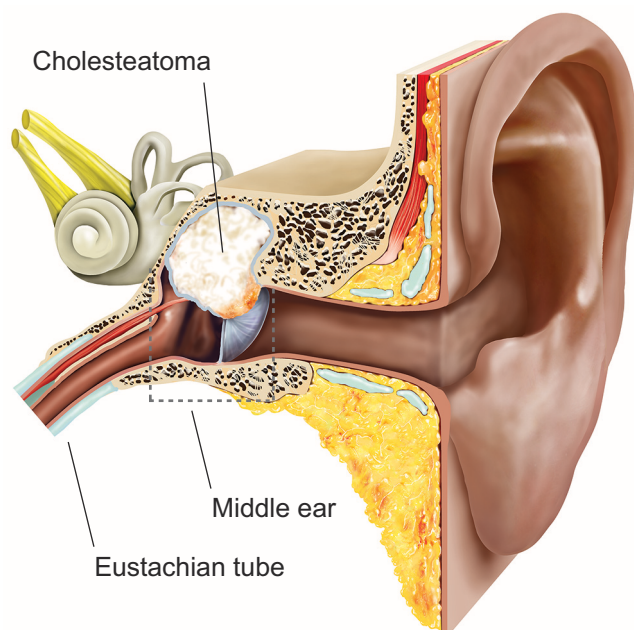


Figure 1  
A cholesteatoma in the middle ear

### What are the benefits of surgery?

The aim is to remove the cholesteatoma and stop the discharge. It may be possible to improve your hearing at the same time.

### Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Regular cleaning and antibiotics will help to keep any unpleasant-smelling discharge or infection under control.

### What does the operation involve?

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes between two to three hours.

Your surgeon will make a cut in front of or behind your ear. They will remove bone from around the cholesteatoma to see where it has spread to, and remove it.

Your surgeon may need to remove the bone of your ear canal. If this happens, they will shape the bone behind your ear (mastoid bone) into a cavity that opens into your ear.

### What complications can happen?

#### 1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring
- Blood clots

#### 2 Specific complications

- Hearing loss
- Numbness of your ear
- Damage to the facial nerve
- Change of taste
- Dizziness
- Tinnitus
- Ear discharge
- Allergic reaction

### How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the next day. You should be able to return to work after about three weeks.

If your surgeon needed to shape your mastoid bone into a cavity, you will probably need to come back to the clinic several times in the first few months until the cavity has healed completely.

Protect your ear from water, using cotton wool and Vaseline, and do not swim until your surgeon has told you that your ear has healed.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

If the bone of your ear canal was not removed, some cholesteatoma may be left behind.

### Summary

A cholesteatoma can damage your ear and cause serious complications. Surgery is the only way you can be cured.

## Acknowledgements

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