

Bone anchored hearing aid (BAHA) surgery

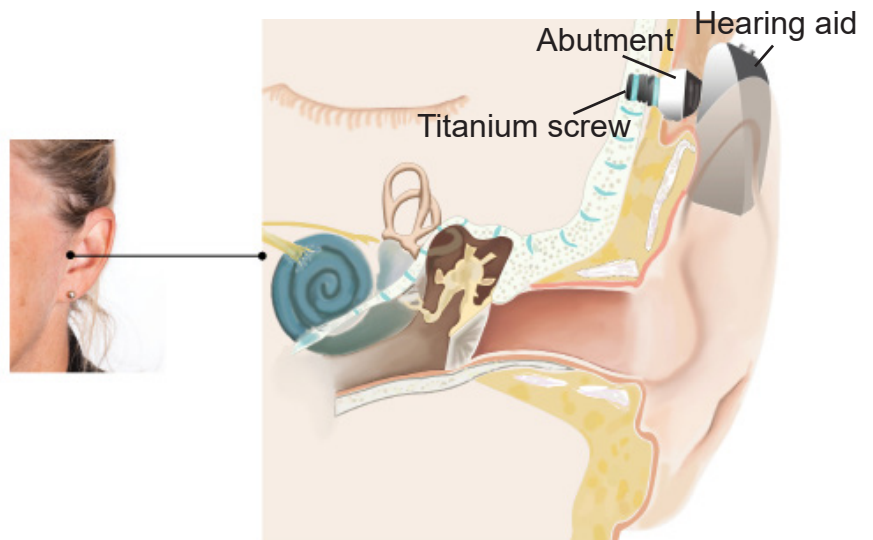
Information for patients from the Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) Department

You have been referred to the hospital to have a **bone anchored hearing aid** fitted. The aim of this procedure is to improve your hearing and give you better quality of life. If after reading this leaflet you have any further questions, please speak to a member of the ENT team carrying out your procedure.

What is a bone anchored hearing aid (BAHA)?

A BAHA is a hearing device that allows you to process sound through your skull, bypassing your outer and middle ear.

A small titanium screw and a connecting abutment is anchored into the bone behind your ear (temporal bone). A small hearing aid is then able to clip on and off the abutment, which will sit against your skin.



How does it work?

A BAHA allows sound to be transmitted to your inner ear through the bone, therefore improving your ability to hear



Why has this been recommended for me?

You have been recommended for this operation as you are suffering from hearing loss due to problems with your outer or middle ear. However, your inner ear works well, and can be stimulated directly through the bone.

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.

Will I have a general anaesthetic?

This procedure is usually done under a general anaesthetic (you will be asleep for the procedure). However, it is also possible to do it under local anaesthetic, where you are awake but the area is numbed. Which anaesthetic to use will be discussed with you at your preassessment appointment. If you have any questions please ask your anaesthetist on the day of your surgery.

What happens before my operation?

You will meet with your surgeon and be asked to sign a consent form. The consent form will explain the risks and benefits of the operation and any common complications. Use this time to ask any last minute questions you may have. Please be aware that you can change your mind and withdraw consent for treatment at any time.

You will have a preassessment check before your operation where you will be asked some health related questions and have some tests (such as blood pressure, height and weight) to check that you are suitable for surgery.

You will also need to have a hearing test before your operation. This will be arranged by your surgeon and the audiology department.

Will I have to stay in hospital overnight?

This procedure is performed as a day case procedure in the day surgery department at the William Harvey Hospital. Most patients are successfully discharged home on the same day as their procedure, but very occasionally some individuals need to stay in overnight for observations. Please bring an overnight bag just in case.

What happens during my operation?

Before your surgery begins, your surgeon will discuss the surgery with you again and will ask you to confirm your consent.

In the operating room an area of hair will be shaved off from behind your ear – please do not do this yourself. A flap of skin is then lifted, and a titanium screw is inserted into the temporal bone. The BAHA abutment is delivered through the skin flap, which is then stitched back into position.

A wound dressing and healing cap is used to cover your implant.

The titanium screw fuses with your temporal bone over a four week period. Once this has happened, you will return to hospital and an audiologist will fit your BAHA hearing aid.

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 the William Harvey Hospital (see contact details on page 4) 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 nurse practitioner at your follow-up appointment one week after your surgery.

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.

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.

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.

What if I choose not to have the surgery?

There are other hearing aids and hearing implants available and more information regarding the suitability of these devices can be provided by the audiology department or your consultant.

Contact details

- Should you have any **concerns about your wound site or the bone anchored screw** you should 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 868686
- Rotary Ward, William Harvey Hospital	Telephone: 01233 616261
- Audiology Department	Telephone: 01227 864252

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.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation