An ossiculoplasty is an operation to repair, reconstruct and improve the movement of the tiny bones of hearing in the middle ear. These bones may have become damaged or less mobile due to infection or disease such as long-standing middle ear infection (otitis media), or trauma such as a head injury.

The operation involves either reshaping the bones already there so that they work better or using tiny false replacements (prostheses). An incision (surgical cut) is made either in front or behind the ear to reach the area.

The main benefit of having an ossiculoplasty is that it will hopefully improve your hearing.

Most procedures are straightforward however, as with any surgical procedure there is a small chance of side-effects or complications such as:

- Anaesthetic complications eg. soreness or bruising around the injection site on your hand/arm, sore throat from the breathing tube, damage to teeth and nausea and/or muscular pains (from anaesthetic drugs).
- No change or a worsening of the hearing in the ear which has been operated on.
- Facial weakness which may be temporary or, in rare cases, permanent, caused by damage to the nerve which makes the muscles of the face move the facial nerve.
- Dizziness can occur occasionally, but usually resolves after a short period of time.
• Infection of the wound site (where the stitches are) may occur. This may cause pain, inflammation and tightness of the area. Occasionally, a discharge or bleeding may occur from the stitch line.

• Infection or bleeding may also occur from within the ear and this may cause pain and/or a bloody odorous discharge from the ear pack within your ear. However, a small amount of bleeding or discharge is to be expected after this surgery. If you are at all concerned, please telephone Ward 307 on the number provided.

• Disturbances to your sense of taste. This occasionally happens and is caused by damage to a particular nerve, which runs through the ear space.

• Reaction to the ear dressings. Occasionally the ear may develop an allergic reaction to the dressing in your ear canal and the outer ear (pinna) may become red and swollen. You will need to be seen by an ENT doctor as the dressings may need to be removed. Once the dressing is removed the allergic reaction should settle.

If you are concerned about any of these risks, or have any further queries please speak to your consultant.

Your consultant has recommended this procedure as being the best option. However, the alternative to this procedure is to have a hearing aid. If you would like more information about this, please speak to your consultant or one of the nurses caring for you.

There is also the option of not receiving any treatment at all. The consequences of not receiving any treatment are that your symptoms will not get better. If you would like more information please speak to your consultant or one of the nurses caring for you.
Getting ready for the operation
You will be asked to attend the Pre-operative Assessment Clinic. A specialist nurse will discuss the operation with you. You may need to undergo some routine tests before your operation eg. heart trace (ECG), x-ray, blood test.

You will be asked some routine questions about your general health, including whether you smoke or drink alcohol, any allergies you may have and any medicines you are taking at present.

It would be helpful if you bring your medicines with you. The nurse will need to know their name and the strength. This includes non-prescription medicines including herbal/complementary medicines.

For a time before certain types of anaesthetic you will need to stop eating, drinking and chewing gum. This will be explained to you and you may also be given a booklet about this. If you have any questions please contact the hospital - telephone number on your admission letter.

You will be asked to have a bath and shower before coming into hospital (if possible).

Smoking cessation
Smoking greatly increases the risk of complications during and after surgery, so the sooner you can stop the better. Even a few days before your operation can help to improve healing and recovery afterwards.

For free help and advice contact your GP or Fresh Start Stop Smoking Service. Telephone: 01332 861174.
On admission
When you arrive on the ward you will be introduced to the staff and shown to your bed.

Your details (name, date of birth etc) will be checked on a number of occasions before the operation. This is normal practice and is for your safety. You will be given an operation gown and a wristband to wear.

You will have the opportunity to discuss the surgery with the staff. It is important that you understand what you have come into hospital for, as you will be asked to sign a consent form to this effect.

You will be given the choice of walking to the anaesthetic room or alternatively you could be taken in a wheelchair if you wish.

What sort of anaesthetic will I have?
Your operation will be carried out under general anaesthetic, which means you will be asleep throughout.

It is possible for this operation to be carried out using a local anaesthetic, although this is quite unusual and not routinely done in this hospital.

The anaesthetist will visit you before your operation and discuss the anaesthetic with you.

What should I expect after the operation?
When the operation is over, you will have your pulse, blood pressure, breathing and wounds checked regularly by a nurse.

It is usual to feel drowsy for several hours. You will be given oxygen through a facemask until you are more awake.
Anaesthetics can sometimes make people feel sick. The nurse may offer you an injection if the sick feeling does not go away. This should help to settle it. If you are particularly worried about this or have experienced problems with previous anaesthetics you can discuss this with the anaesthetist before your operation.

You will usually have a drip running into a vein in your arm or hand until you are eating and drinking again.

**Dressings (bandages/stitches)**
Your wound will have stitches to keep it together while it heals. These are usually dissolvable and will not normally need removing. However, this will be confirmed before you leave hospital.

You will have a yellow iodine pack down your ear which may make your hearing muffled. This will stay in for approximately 3 weeks. Your surgeon will remove it under the microscope during a clinic appointment.

You may also have a bandage around your head. This is usually removed the morning after your operation, before you go home.

**Pain relief**
If you experience pain it is important to tell the nurses who can give you painkillers to help. You will also be provided with some to take home with you.

**Mobilising**
You will be encouraged to get up as soon as you feel able to; although this must be done carefully at first as you may feel a little dizzy. It is important to mobilise as soon as possible after any operation as this reduces the risk of developing blood clots.

**Going home**
You will usually be in hospital for 1 night and will be able to go home the following day. Depending on your general health and the time of day your operation is carried out you may have this done as a day case procedure.
Ear care
Your ear may feel uncomfortable after surgery. This may last for around 3 weeks, or more generally until the ear pack is removed. There may be a slight bloody discharge from your ear, which will cause some bleeding onto the ear pack. This is normal so please do not worry.

Change the cotton wool covering the ear pack as it becomes soiled or at least daily. This must be done extremely carefully so that the ear pack is not disturbed. You may need to use a mirror to do this.

Keep your ear dry. We recommended that you place some cotton wool smeared in Vaseline just inside your ear before washing your hair or showering, then replace it with a piece of dry cotton wool as soon as you have finished.

Try to sneeze with your mouth open whilst you have the ear pack in as this will be less painful for you.

Pain relief
It is usual to feel some pain after this operation. Take either the painkillers you were given by the hospital or a mild painkiller such as Paracetamol. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions and do not exceed the stated dose.

If you experience severe pain and/or redness of the ear or stitch line, please contact Ward 307.

Stitches
Your stitches will be removed at your GP surgery a week after the operation. In some cases the stitches used dissolve naturally and do not need removing (a card with instructions will be given to you if necessary).
**Time off work**
We advise you to take at least 5 days off work if you are in sedentary employment (e.g., reasonably quiet, not moving around too much) and 7 - 14 days in more active employment (to avoid any prostheses being displaced).

The hospital doctors should be able to give you a sick note for a short length of time. Further sick notes should be obtained from your GP.

**Returning to normal activities**
We advise you to avoid any strenuous activity until you come for your follow up appointment and to have your ear pack removed. You can then ask your surgeon about activities such as sport and flying. He/she will be able to advise you if/when it is safe to do these things.

**Driving**
Do not drive until you feel completely able. It is usually advised that you should refrain from driving for at least 48 hours after a general anaesthetic. However, this may be longer if you are feeling unwell or dizzy. Please contact your insurance company for specific advice regarding driving, as they may refuse to meet a claim if they feel you have driven too soon.

**Smoking**
We strongly advise you not to smoke after your operation as this irritates the lining of the middle ear/mastoid cavity and may delay the healing process.

**Further outpatient appointment(s)**
An appointment will be made for you in approximately 3 weeks and if you are not given a date before you leave the hospital this will be posted to you.
Important information for day case patients
You must not drive or go home by public transport. Therefore, you must make arrangements for someone to collect you. It is not appropriate to go home unaccompanied in a taxi. Please note hospital transport and ambulances are not normally available for day patients.

The anaesthetic drugs remain in your body for 24 hours and during this time are gradually excreted from the body. You are under the influence of drugs during this time and therefore there are certain things that you should and should not do.

For 24 hours you should:

- Ensure that a responsible adult stays at home with you for 24 hours.
- Rest quietly at home for the rest of the day - go to bed or lie on the settee.
- Drink plenty of fluids, but not too much tea or coffee.
- Eat a light diet eg. soup or sandwiches. Avoid greasy or heavy food as this may cause you to feel sick.
- Lie flat if you feel faint or dizzy.
- Contact your GP if you have not passed urine 12 hours after your operation.
- Have a lie in the next day. It could take 2 - 3 days before the weariness wears off and you could suffer lapses in concentration for up to a week.
For at least 24 hours after your operation you must not:

- Drive. Your insurance company may refuse to meet a claim if they feel you have driven too soon. It is also advisable to contact your insurance company with regards to cover following a general anaesthetic.

- Lock yourself in the bathroom or toilet or make yourself inaccessible to the person looking after you.

- Operate any domestic appliances or machinery.

- Drink alcohol.

- Make any important decisions or sign any important documents.

- Be responsible for looking after small children.

- Watch too much television, read too much or use a computer as this can cause blurred vision.

References
www.quizzer.co.uk/item/1797
www.qmtv.medicdirect.co.uk/operations/default.asp?pid=1869&step=4
www.ich.icl.ac.uk/factsheets
www.demo2.medicdirect.co.uk/operations

We hope your recovery is speedy and uneventful.
If you have any queries please telephone
Head and Neck Outpatients on 01332 787472,
Monday to Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm.

After 5.00pm and at weekends contact Ward 307 on 01332 787307

NHS Direct is a 24 hour nurse led, confidential service providing general health care advice and information.
Telephone 0845 4647 or visit the website at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the buildings and grounds of Derby’s Hospitals. For advice and support about giving up smoking please call Free Phone 0800 707 6870.