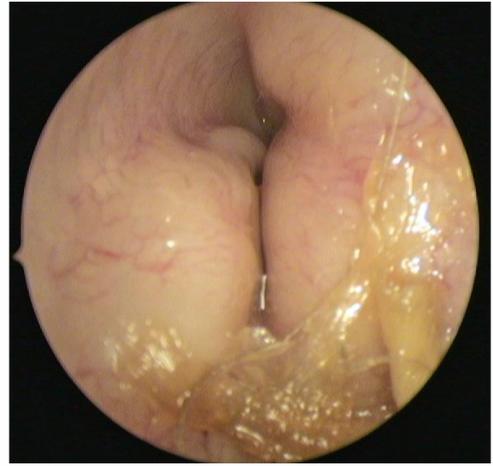


## ***Exostoses (Surfer's ear)***

### **What are Exostoses?**

Exostoses are benign bony growths of the external ear canal. Cold water stimulates the bone lining in the external ear canal to grow abnormally. With continued bony growth water and debris can be trapped causing blockage and infection in the ear. The hearing loss with this external ear canal problem is a conductive hearing loss.



### **Medical Treatment for Exostoses**

With water trapping the use of Earcalm spray will evaporate the water and minimise ear infections. When ear infections occur they usually require antibiotic ear drops and occasionally antibiotic tablets. A hearing aid may help rehabilitate the hearing loss.

### **Surgical Treatment for Exostoses**

When the patient has recurrent ear infections or blockage they become a candidate for surgery called canalplasty. Surgery to remove the bony growths is performed under a general anaesthetic and involves an incision behind the ear. The bony growths are drilled away and this usually takes between 1 to 3 hours. The patient usually goes home the same day and spends 3 to 5 days off work."

The ear canal will be packed with gelatin sponge which is soaked with antibiotics. The packing stays for 1 to 2 weeks and the ear feels blocked for that time. Tinnitus frequently present before surgery is almost always present temporarily after surgery. It may persist for one to two months and then decrease in proportion to the hearing improvement. Should the hearing be unimproved or worse, the tinnitus may persist or be worse. Temporary loss of skin sensation in and about the ear is common following surgery. This numbness may involve the entire outer ear and may last for up to one year. The jaw joint is in intimate contact with the ear canal. Some soreness or stiffness in jaw movement is very common after ear surgery. It usually subsides within one to two months. Ear pain when you chew or move your neck, following any chronic ear surgery is expected for 7 days. Pain killing medication controls the discomfort. When the ear is healing itching in the canal is common and as the nerve fibres regenerate around the ear, sharp shooting pains lasting for a few seconds are common. Scarring of the external ear canal skin after the surgery is the most troublesome complication. The raw skin surfaces covering the raw bone sometimes causes scarring in the ear canal that requires revision surgery in a small number of patients. Ear infection with drainage, swelling and pain may persist following surgery or, on rare occasions, may develop following surgery due to poor healing of the ear tissue. Where this is the case, additional surgery might be necessary to control the infection. The facial nerve travels through the ear bone in close association with the middle ear bones, ear drum and the mastoid. A very rare post-operative complication of ear surgery is temporary paralysis of one side of the face. This may occur as the result of an abnormality or a swelling of the nerve and usually subsides spontaneously.