

Having Baha surgery – Information for parents and carers

The aim of this information sheet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about your child having surgical Baha. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives of the procedure as well as what you can expect when you come to hospital. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the doctor or audiologist caring for your child.

What is a Baha?

Baha stands for **bone anchored hearing aid**. A Baha is a hearing system that is useful for children and adults who have:

- **A conductive hearing loss** – where sounds are unable to pass from the outer ear to the inner ear.
- **A single sided sensori-neural hearing loss** – where the inner part of the ear (the cochlea) on one side is not working.
- **A mixed hearing loss** – a combination of the above.

Surgical Baha involves having an operation to place a small titanium implant in the bone behind your child's ear. A titanium screw (abutment) is attached to the implant. The Baha sound processor is clipped to the abutment and worn externally. The sound processor can be taken on or off at any time. The sound processor converts sounds to vibrations and transmits these to the inner ear by vibrating the skull bone.

What are the benefits – why should my child have a Baha?

Surgical Baha provides useable hearing to children who cannot benefit from traditional hearing aids. It provides greater sound quality than a Baha worn on a soft headband because it is connected directly to the bone. This means the sound vibrations are stronger and your child can hear more.

What are the risks?

- Anaesthetic risks (you may find our booklet on having an anesthetic useful – please ask for a copy if you don't have one)
- Infection of the Baha wound may lead to the Baha being removed.
- Failure of the implant to integrate with the bone. This could result in the Baha abutment falling out.

Are there any alternatives?

The Baha device can be worn on a hard or soft headband. A traditional bone conductor hearing aid could also be used. These alternatives do not require surgery. The sound quality of these devices is not as good as a surgical Baha.

Asking for your consent

We want to involve you in all the decisions about your child's care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This confirms that you agree to have the procedure and understand what it involves. You should receive the leaflet **Helping you decide: our consent policy** which gives you more information. If you do not, please ask us for one.

How can I prepare for my child's Baha surgery?

You can prepare a young child for Baha surgery by playing 'doctors and nurses' at home. Practice having an anaesthetic by putting dolly or teddy to sleep with a pretend face mask. Put a bandage around dolly or teddy's head. Have your child pack a small bag of favourite toys to bring to the hospital. You will need to bring pyjamas for your child that button down the front as they will have a big bandage around their head immediately after surgery. Bring some things to entertain yourself during the surgery.

Baha surgery will involve staying at hospital for one or possibly two nights. If there is space, it may be possible for one parent can stay on the ward with the child. Decide which parent will stay on the ward beforehand. If you live a long way from the hospital, accommodation may be provided for another parent or family member on site. However, accommodation is very limited and may not be available. Please advise the ENT admissions team if you require accommodation when they contact you about the date for your child's surgery.

Pre-admissions check

You will need to bring your child for a pre-admissions check at the Artic Day Unit, Evelina Children's Hospital before their surgery. This appointment may be weeks or days before your child's surgery. At this appointment a doctor will make sure your child is medically fit for surgery.

What happens during Baha surgery?

The surgical Baha procedure for young children is usually carried out in two stages due to the reduced thickness and density of their skull bone.

- **Stage one** – The surgeon will place a titanium implant in the bone behind your child's ear. This operation takes approximately one and a half hours.
- **Stage two** – This operation takes place approximately six months after the first operation, allowing time for the titanium implant to integrate with the bone. In the second stage surgery, the abutment is attached to the implant. This procedure takes about 30 minutes.

For older children and teenagers, the two stages may be done as one operation.

On the day of surgery you will stay with your child until they are under the general anaesthetic. During the surgery you can wait on the ward or go for a walk. If you leave the ward you can leave your mobile phone number with the nursing staff and they will contact you when your child has been moved to the recovery room.

Will my child feel any pain?

The Baha wound area may feel tender and sore after surgery. You will be prescribed pain medication for your child if this is necessary.

What happens after the procedure?

You can go to the recovery room and be with your child when they wake up. They may feel sick from the anaesthetic, but that shouldn't last long. When your child has recovered from the anaesthetic they will go back to the ward. They may feel sleepy for the rest of the day.

Your child will have a drip in his or her hand or foot to receive pain medication if necessary and to keep hydrated until he or she is eating and drinking normally. Your child will have a large pressure bandage around his or her head. This will stay on overnight but will be removed the next day.

Your child will be able to go home the day after surgery if he or she is eating and drinking normally and feeling well.

What do I need to do after my child goes home?

- Do not wash your child's hair until you come for the follow-up appointment.
- Do not try to clean the wound.
- If there is a dressing over the wound (after stage two surgery) do not remove it.
- Do not send your child to school or nursery until after the follow-up appointment.
- Try to keep your child from bumping his or her head. Avoid rough play.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

Your child will have a follow-up appointment on the Tuesday after the surgery. This appointment will be in the ENT clinic, 2nd Floor, Lambeth Wing, St Thomas' Hospital. The Baha nurse will advise you about wound care at the follow up appointment. She will advise the team when your child is ready to have his or her Baha sound processor fitted.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's surgery, please contact us using the details below.

Paediatric auditory implant programme

t: 020 7188 6245 (9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday).

Baha nurses station

t: 020 7188 2187 (9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday).

Out of hours

t: 020 7188 7188 (main hospital number) and ask for the ENT registrar on call.

Further information

PALS - To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). Ask a member of staff to direct you to PALS or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC) - For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

t: 020 7188 3416 **e:** kic@gstt.nhs.uk

Language support services - If you need an interpreter or information about the care you are receiving in the language or format of your choice, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS Direct - Offers health information and advice from specially trained nurses over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 0845 4647 **w:** www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk