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Ear Buddies to Prevent Future Ear Surgeries?

New ear shaping device could save over 200,000 children from future ear surgery

A new, simple and inexpensive medical device for babies that parents can use at home will easily correct misshapen or protruding ears avoiding possible future corrective surgery.

According to US Government statistics, every year 5% of newborn babies are born with misshaped ears. Ear defects such as bat ear, lop ear, cup ear, rim kinks, folded-over helical rim, Stahl's bar, ear tags and clefts are increasingly common. In another 2% of babies, their ears may be normal at birth, but begin to protrude and stick out at around three months of age.



Before

After

For many babies born with these conditions, ear surgery was their only option. Now thanks to world renowned British plastic and reconstructive surgeon, Dr. David Gault, FRCS, developer of Ear Buddies?, the shape of a baby's ears can now be easily reshaped and without the need for an expensive surgical procedure. When a baby is born the cartilage framework of the ears is extremely soft due to the mother's estrogen hormones. During birth, some compression on a baby's ears is natural, but if the ears remain an odd shape 48 hours after delivery, or if they begin to show signs of protrusion, this irregularity will quickly become permanent as the cartilage in the ear hardens.

Ear Buddies? are easy to use splints developed by Dr. Gault that re-shape the cartilage folds in a baby's ears to restore the natural curves, and to hold the ear close to the side of the head. This allows the framework of the ear to harden into a controlled shape that becomes a permanent, surgery-free correction.

"The splints are easily fitted at home so that parents can help their children obtain normal shaped ears from day one," said Dr. Gault.

The pressure of the splint in the scaphal hollow resets the natural spring of the ear cartilage correcting any tendency to make the ears stick out whilst reshaping the proper contours of the rest of the ear. Dr. Gault warns that parents DO NOT simply stick the child's ear to the side of the head as this can distort the shape of the ear, particularly the rim.

Depending on the baby's age, Dr. Gault recommends two weeks of splintage at birth or one month of splintage from one week to one month of age, two months of splintage at two months of age, three months at three months, and so on.

"The younger the baby, the shorter the amount of time needed to correct the problem," continued Dr. Gault. "Breast milk contains estrogens, and these hormones keep the cartilage softer so if the baby is older, and the mother has stopped breast-feeding, the baby may need a couple of extra months using Ear Buddies?. " Dr. Gault went on to note that children can often be cruel and even bullying to others who look obviously different, he noted that his device will have the lifetime benefit of helping avoid self-esteem issues often felt by children with noticeably different or protruding ears.

Ear Buddies are now in use at the US Naval Hospital in San Diego and the Mayo Clinic. In the UK, they are endorsed by the Royal College of Surgeons, BMJ, Bounty, the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, BUPA and ENT-UK, the British Association of Otorhinolaryngologists.

About Dr. David Gault

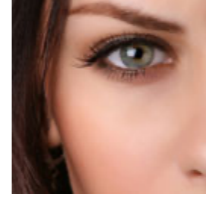
Dr. David Gault qualified in the UK at Edinburgh University, trained in Plastic Surgery in London, and gained further experience in Paris, California and Japan. He was Consultant Plastic Surgeon at Mount Vernon Hospital, England and The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London, England, and Honorary Senior Lecturer at University College, London. A Visiting Professor, he set up the UK's first ear reconstruction center over twenty five years ago. He specializes in aesthetic plastic surgery and is an international authority on laser surgery and the correction of ear deformity.

Source: Dr. David Gault

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