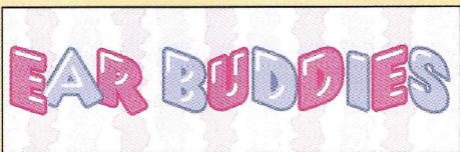


# Ear Buddies: ear shape and position corrector

Each year a number of children are born with ears that are misshapen or that stick out from the side of the head more than the norm. Surgery must be delayed until the age of five at the earliest, since before this the cartilage framework of the ear is too soft and floppy to hold the sutures or to remodel well.

In 1990, Consultant Plastic Surgeon Mr David Gault FRCS, noticed a 'kink' in one of the ears of his newborn son, and decided to put a theory of his into practice. Ear splinting was an accepted technique in pedigree dogs like beagles, whose value was greatly diminished by a floppy ear. Mr Gault applied a home-made splint to his son's ear, and was rewarded with a perfect fix days later. In 1995 the splints were trialed in the UK with an excellent response.



The Ear Buddy is a simple splint that will correct simple deformities and pin back prominent ears at birth, sparing the child years of teasing. The splint works for the very reason that surgery in infancy does not — the cartilage in the ear of the newborn child is extremely soft and malleable. Simple enough for parents to apply and comfortable enough to wear 24 hours a day, until correction is achieved, the splint nestles in to the hollow just inside the rim of the ear.

Ear Buddies kits are now available on the NHS in some plastic surgery and paediatric units throughout the country, and priced £29.85, can be purchased mail order by both parents and health professionals. The latest kits have been completely redesigned. The splints are now even comfier and come in two sizes: shorter splints for newborns and slightly longer splints for those children (30% of all children with bat ears) whose ears don't become prominent until they are three months of age. For further information contact Ear Buddies on 01628 531 661.