

LOP (CONSTRICTED) EAR



John Hilinski M.D.
PLASTIC SURGERY

One Of The World's Foremost Authorities

www.drhilinski.com

INTRODUCTION

A true expert in lop ear deformity

After years and years of performing cosmetic ear pinning, or otoplasty, surgery, I began seeing more and more patients coming to me who were bothered by the fact their ears were abnormally shaped at the top where the border of the ear was much thicker than average and/or folded over. This is a condition called lop ear, or constricted ear, deformity.

Unfortunately, otoplasty surgery simply could not help these patients. In order to correct this congenitally abnormality, it took a much more creative and technical approach to surgically reshape these ears. As the years passed, we began seeing increasing numbers of patients with lop ear - and soon developed our own technique for helping these patients achieve a much more normal looking ear.

I have prepared this authoritative guide to provide you with as much knowledge as possible regarding lop ear and the corrective surgery. This includes details about its origins, the consultation process, realistic expectations and actual surgical outcomes from several of my own patients.

John Hilinski, M.D.



JOHN HILINSKI, M.D.

Credentials matter

MEDICAL EDUCATION

Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA

SURGICAL INTERNSHIP

University of California, San Diego Medical Center, San Diego, CA

RESIDENCY

University of California, San Diego Medical Center, San Diego, CA

PLASTIC SURGERY FELLOWSHIP

University of Illinois, Chicago Medical Center, Chicago, IL

BOARD CERTIFICATION

American Board of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
American Board of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery

HONORS

Castle & Connolly Top Doctor
Voted one of San Diego's Top Doctors

EXPERTISE

Medical Expert Reviewer for the Medical Board of California
American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery



FOLLOW US ONLINE

Stay connected with our practice

Follow us on social media for exclusive before-and-after transformations, behind-the-scenes surgical moments, and a closer look at the artistry behind facial plastic surgery. It's where education meets inspiration—designed to keep you informed, empowered, and a step ahead in your aesthetic journey.



@drhilinski



@JohnMHilinskiMDSanDiego

LOP EAR

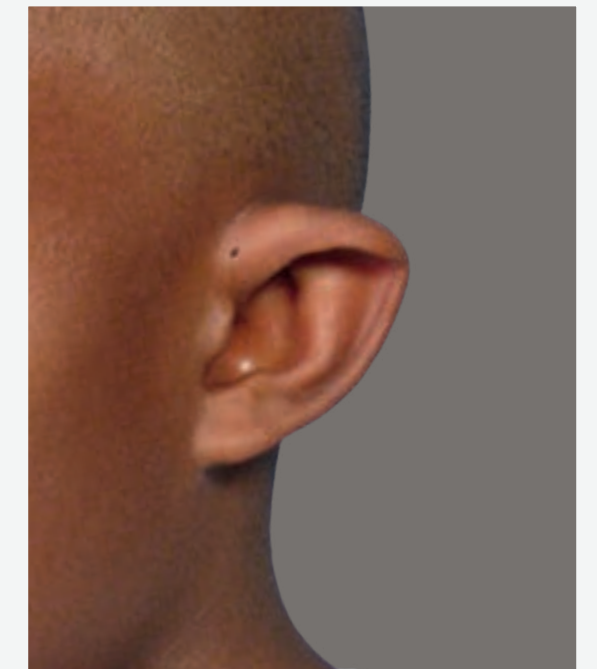
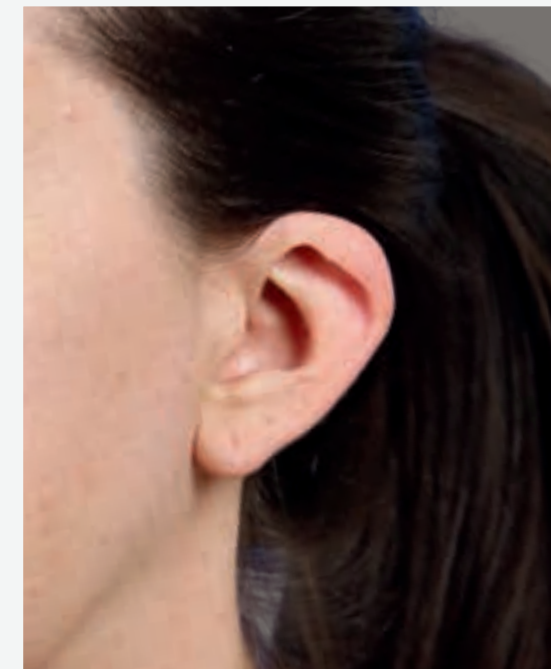
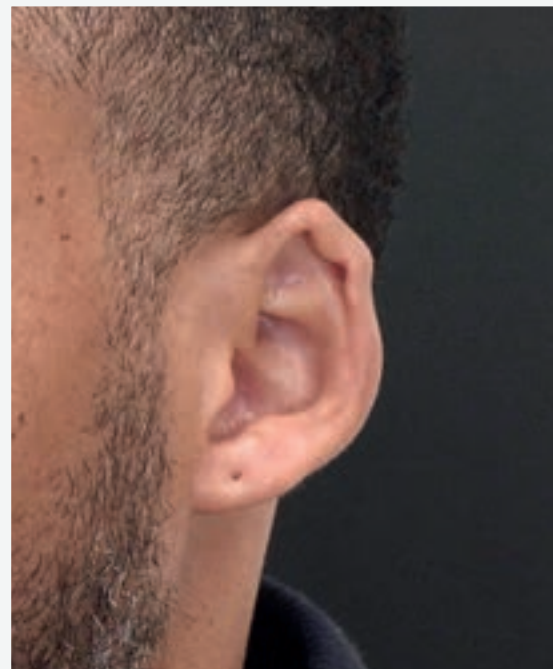
Understanding the constricted ear

Lop ear (also called constricted ear or cup ear) is a congenital deformity where the upper portion of the ear does not develop properly. This can be the result of several factors including some genetic linkage and some external factors that influence intrauterine growth. Cosmetically the outer border of the ear - called the helical rim - appears to be thicker than usual and folds over. Essentially the ear fails to develop fully in terms of height. The lop ear deformity presents visually along a spectrum from mild to rather severe looking abnormalities in terms of shape and size of the ear.

Mild Lop Ear



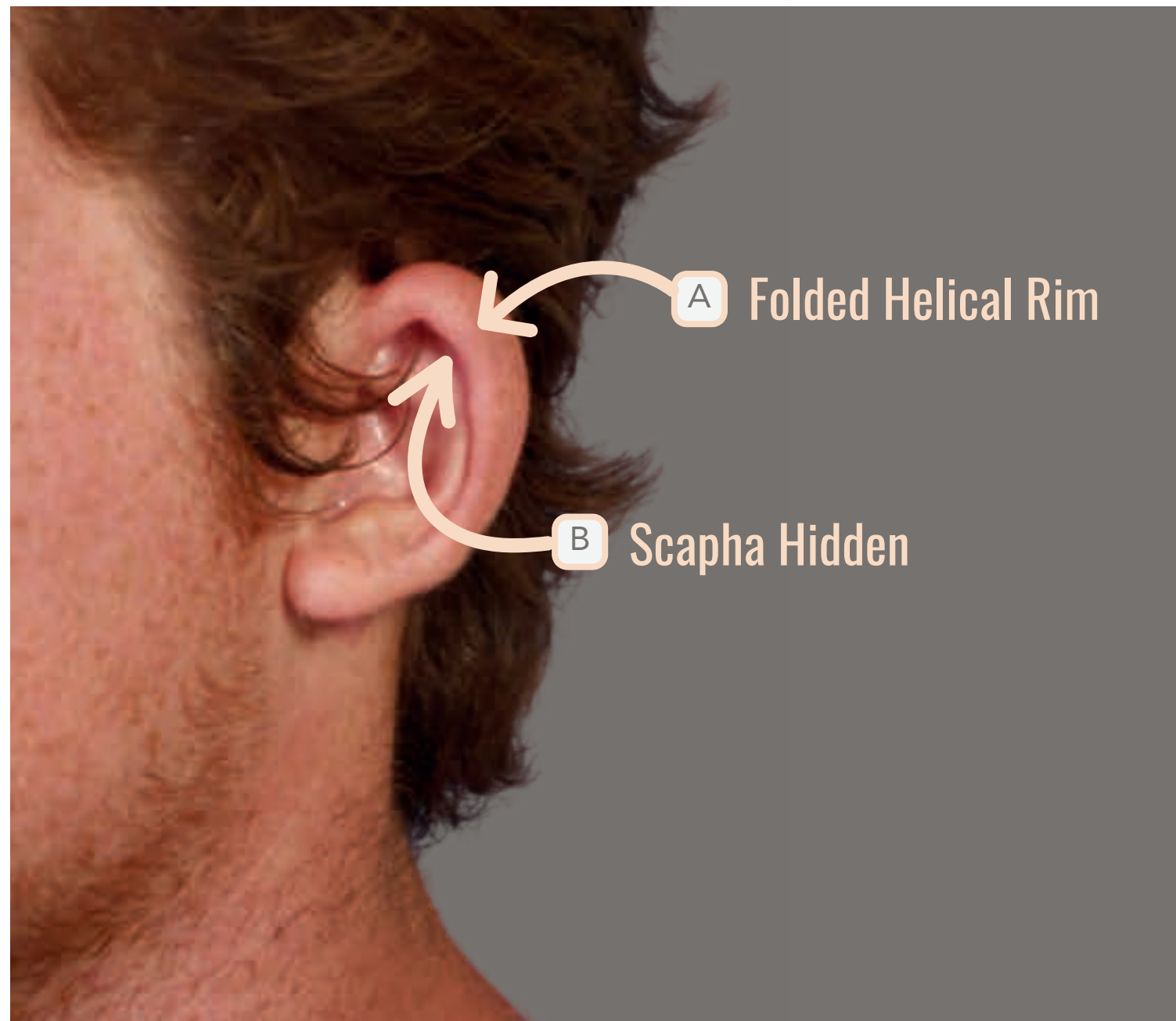
Severe Lop Ear



LIDDING

One of the more common presentations

A very common abnormality that we see in our office is referred to as lidding of the ear. It is referred to as lidding because the helical rim folds over the scapha of the ear in a manner similar to how a lid looks sitting atop a pot. This is why you will see lop ear often times referred to as a lidded ear or lidding.



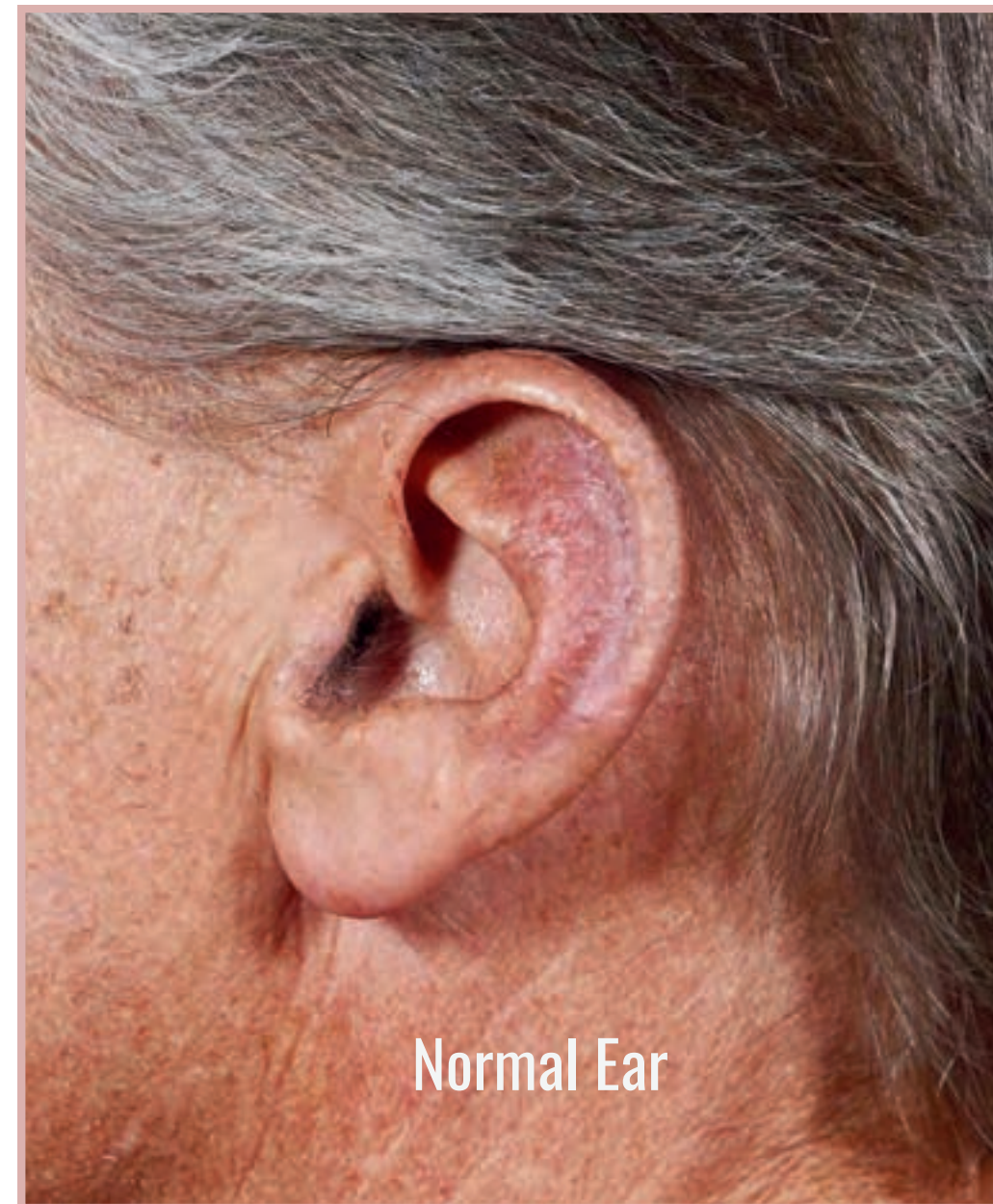
COMPARISON TO NORMAL

What the helical contour should look like

So how abnormal is a lop ear with lidding? You can see the comparison to normal here. As you can readily tell, a normal ear has a much thinner helical rim and the scapha is clearly visible when looking from the side and oblique views.



Lop Ear



Normal Ear

AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION

Known around the world as THE expert

In addition to all the patients from around the United States that have come to us, we are honored to have ear surgery patients flying to San Diego from around the world, including the following foreign countries.

CANADA
AUSTRALIA
ISRAEL
ENGLAND
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
IRELAND

COLUMBIA
BRASIL
SERBIA
GERMANY
MEXICO
FRANCE

TRAVEL TO SAN DIEGO

America's Finest City

We are very fortunate to be based in one of the nation's most beautiful locations - often times referred to as America's Finest City.

Our weather tends to be very moderate all year round, which typically makes for easy and pleasurable travel. The office and surgery center are just 20 minutes away from the airport and readily accessible by car.

Should you choose to come in advance of your surgery date, there are endless opportunities for you to tour the city and enjoy the many attractions.

There is a wide variety of hotel accommodations that range from budget to luxury and in between. San Diego also has a thriving short-term rental industry as an alternative.

Our office is conveniently located near La Jolla and Del Mar — two of San Diego's most scenic and sought-after coastal communities, known for their breathtaking ocean views, upscale charm, and vibrant Southern California lifestyle.

CHAPTER TWO

The consultation process



GENERAL OVERVIEW

The path to lop ear corrective surgery

INITIAL CONSULT

In order to undergo lop ear surgery, you must first have a personalized consultation with Dr. Hilinski. The consultation is traditionally done in person in the office (for local-regional patients) or via a tele-health appointment (for long-distance patients).

To schedule this initial consultation please call our office at (619) 296-3223 or email our surgical consultant using this [link here](#). Given the fact that Dr. Hilinski's practice is quite busy, you may need to wait between 2-4 months before you even have your consultation.

SCHEDULING SURGERY

If Dr. Hilinski considers you to be a candidate for lop ear surgery you may proceed with booking a date to have the actual surgery performed. If you are deemed a candidate for surgery, you will likely need to wait 2-4 more months before having the actual surgery. In end, this whole process could be upwards of 6-12 months from that initial contact with our office. We get it. Most patients looking to have surgery would prefer to have it done sooner rather than later. Unfortunately, this logistical hurdle is very difficult to overcome when dealing with a plastic surgeon who is in such high demand.

A possible alternative that can help shortcut this whole process is noted in the next section.



VIRTUAL CONSULTATION

A possible shortcut to the operating room

If going through the more traditional consultation process noted above is too lengthy, we offer this possible shortcut that can help abbreviate the time it takes to get into the operating room.

In lieu of scheduling the initial consultation, you can choose to have a fully virtual consultation to assess your candidacy for lop ear surgery. In a great majority of cases, we can determine whether or not we can help you out based on a review of photos of your face and ears. If this assessment determines you are a good candidate for surgery, you can proceed with scheduling an actual surgical date. Based on our usual timelines, this virtual consult pathway can shave off months and months of waiting.

4D EMR Medical Chart

It should be noted that before you submit your photos for review, you must successfully create your own medical chart through our online electronic medical record system, called 4D EMR. In order to receive a 4D EMR invitation, please contact our office at (619) 296-3223 or [click here](#) to email our surgical consultant to get this process started. Once your 4D EMR profile is properly completed, you can submit photos for review.

Photos Required

In order to make an accurate assessment of your ears, please submit a series of five (5) high resolution photos as shown below. Each photo has to include your full face and head with the five different angles as demonstrated here. All photos can be submitted via email by [clicking here](#).



CHAPTER THREE

Preparing for lop ear surgery



PREPARE PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY

Keys to a successful surgical outcome

Even though lop ear surgery is typically done while you are awake, it is nonetheless a true surgical procedure in every sense of the word. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that you prepare physically and emotionally prior to having your procedure performed.

Any past and present medical conditions must be fully disclosed to our office so that it can be included in your medical history. For certain conditions, we may even ask that your primary care physician and/or medical specialist provide us with a written note that states you are healthy enough to proceed with the surgery. If this is the case, it must be completed well in advance of your surgical date so that we can avoid unexpected cancellations.

One of the more important things the office will provide you is a list of restricted medications. This list should be reviewed in detail so that you avoid taking any of these medications at least two (2) weeks before and one (1) week after surgery. Failure to do so may lead to unwanted surgical complications.

A number of other preoperative recommendations will be included in a comprehensive communication sent to you by our surgical consultant. Make sure this communication is read from beginning to end at least 2 weeks prior to your surgical date.

Patients who establish realistic expectations tend to have a better overall experience. It has been proven that those seeking surgery based on inherent motivation to address a cosmetic concern - and not to satisfy someone else's desires - have more satisfactory outcomes. That being said, every patient will go through some psychological adjustment period shortly after surgery. This can be impacted by a variety of factors, which include but are not limited to postoperative pain, surgical swelling, and unwanted bruising. Acknowledging this inevitable phase and understanding the temporary nature of it will assist you in a more rapid overall recovery.

LET'S TALK ABOUT SYMMETRY

Your ears will always be siblings, not twins



Everyone has ears that are different from side to side. This includes size, shape and position. That is just a fact of human nature and is something that won't ever change - even with well-performed cosmetic ear surgery.

As we tell patients all the time, there is just no such thing as a pair of ears that are twins. They should all be viewed as siblings because each ear will always have distinct features. Despite how meticulous and detail-oriented we are during your surgery, it is just impossible to create two ears that look exactly alike.

When it comes to results, you have to understand that your ears will never - and we repeat, never - be identical to each other. If that is your expectation, Dr. Hilinski is telling you as a world-renowned ear expert that this is simply unrealistic. We would also advise you to stop any further consideration of cosmetic ear surgery. You are searching for something that you will never find!!!

If, on the other hand, you understand and accept the fact that your resulting ears will always be siblings and not twins, then lop ear surgery may be for you!

CHAPTER FOUR

The day of surgery



WHAT TO EXPECT THE DAY OF SURGERY

Your big day is here!

It is completely normal for you to have a mix of emotions on the day of your surgery. A healthy mix of excitement and anticipation is what we often see and expect. Rest assured as we will shepherd you through this process!

We request that patients wear comfortable clothing on the day of surgery. Loose fitting clothing that does not require you to pull it over the head - such as a button down shirt - is desired.

When you arrive in the office, you will have to complete some paperwork that is required documentation for our ambulatory surgery center. This includes having you review in detail and sign the appropriate consent forms for the surgery. Our staff will also update your health history. If photos have not been taken already, Dr. Hilinski will do so prior to going back into the operating room.

Although not everyone needs it, we can offer you some oral sedative medication (for example, Valium) to help further relax you in advance of the surgery. The oral sedative can only be taken by patients who have arranged for a pickup by someone they know, such as a family member or friend.

You will then be escorted by our staff into the operating room where you will be comfortably positioned on the table. The ears will be numbed up by injecting them with local anesthesia solution. The lop ear surgery then begins, which typically takes 2-3 hours to complete.



IMMEDIATE POST OP EXPERIENCE

What to expect right after surgery

Most lop ear patients are allowed to leave within minutes after the surgery has been completed.

At the conclusion of the surgery, you will have a compression wrap around the ears, which will stay in place for several days before it is removed.

It is recommended that you keep your head elevated for the first three (3) days of healing. This helps minimize blood flow and swelling around the ears. You don't need to sleep upright - you only need to have your head above the heart level. So a slight incline should be just fine.

It is important that you do not allow the dressing to slide or move from the original position. To aid in this effort, many patients will use a travel pillow when sleeping and resting during this early recovery period.

It is also important that you avoid getting the dressing wet or stained.

As soon as you get settled after leaving the office, begin taking the prescribed pain medication as directed. A great majority of our patients will take the medication for the first 1-2 days before they start tapering off completely.



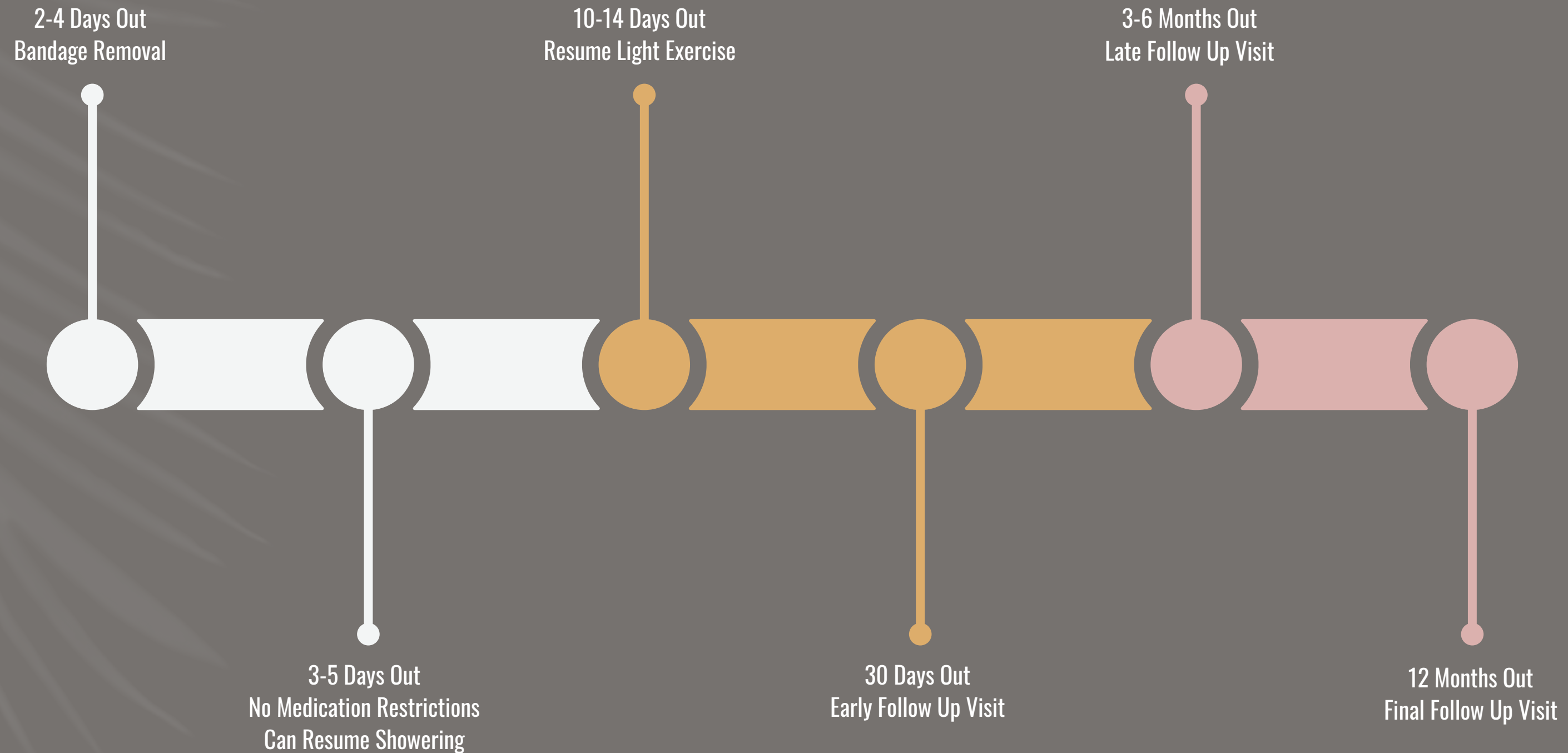
CHAPTER FIVE

Your recovery



POST OP GENERAL TIMELINE

Typical milestones for most patients



MEDICATIONS AFTER SURGERY

Pain relievers and more



We recommend you start taking the prescribed pain medication as soon as you get settled wherever you are staying after surgery. Typical pain relievers that are prescribed include Vicodin, Percocet or Tramadol. If you have a preference for one of these please let us know preoperatively.

These prescriptions are routinely called into your pharmacy in advance of the surgery date so you have adequate time to pick them up. In most cases, it will take several doses of the prescription medication before you start feeling pain relief. Fortunately, most patients only need the pain reliever during the first 1-2 days of recovery. Thereafter, a great majority of patients will switch to over-the-counter Tylenol if they have lingering discomfort.

Keep in mind you still have to avoid blood thinning medications, such as Motrin, Advil, Ibuprofen etc. for 5-6 days after surgery.

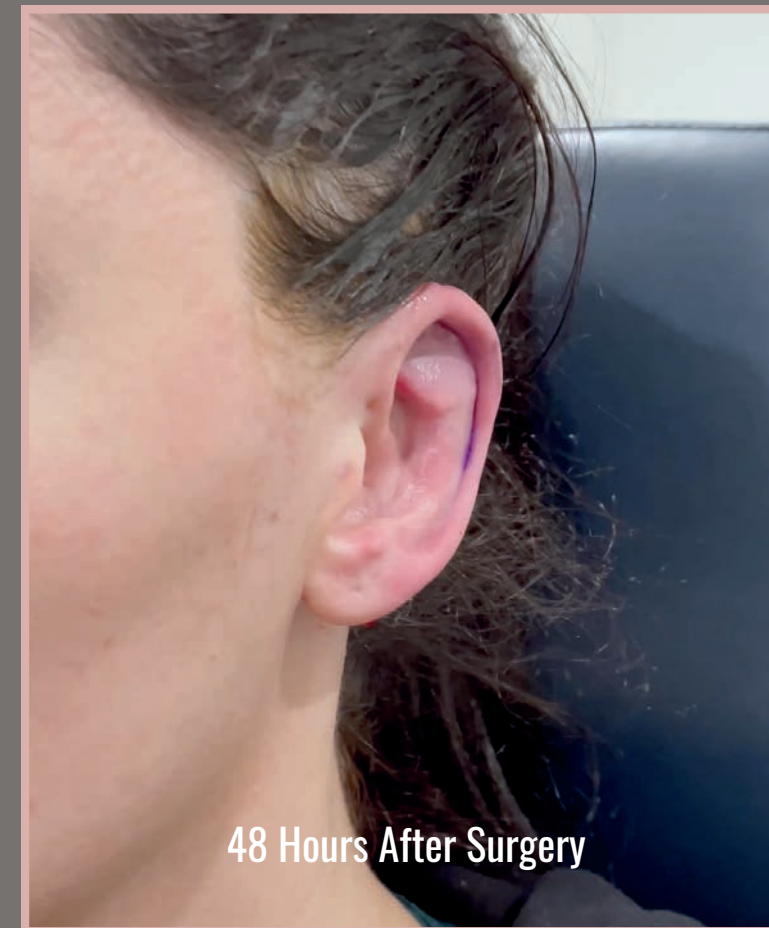
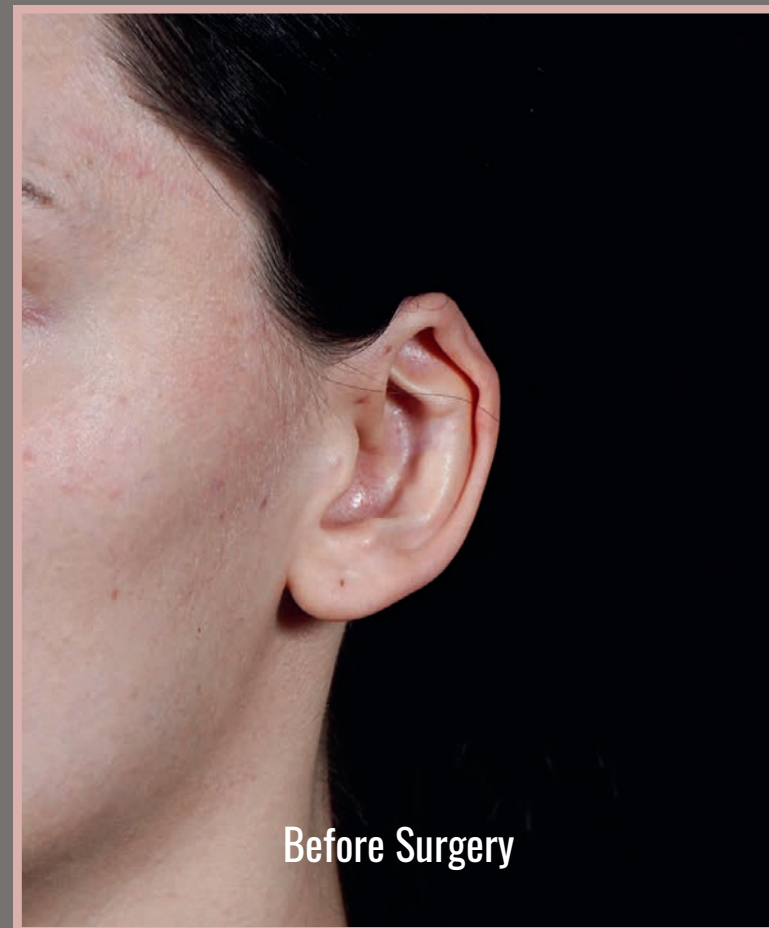
It is also recommended that you take Arnica after the surgery, which helps in reducing swelling and inflammation. Arnica is an over-the-counter homeopathic supplement that should be dispensed to you in the office.

Of note, we normally do NOT prescribe an oral antibiotic after surgery. In our vast experience infection is incredibly rare as long as you follow our peri-operative protocols.

INITIAL BANDAGE REMOVAL

What will I look like days after surgery?

We will typically remove your bandages 2-4 days after surgery. When this initial bandaging is taken off, your ears will look quite swollen. This is normal for this early stage of recovery. In fact, the ears can look puffy and distorted for upwards of 2-3 weeks before the swelling starts to subside. It is also expected that your ears will appear a bit red and inflamed. This is because there is more blood flow to the ears as a result of the surgery.



RECOVERY FROM LOP EAR SURGERY

The journey back to normal

It's important to note that everyone heals differently. But, in general, you should expect to be publicly presentable in 7-10 days after surgery. Your scars will still be visible because it takes a year or so for them to fully heal. But most patients will say they appear socially acceptable by the end of one week of recovery.

Showering: You can shower 3-4 days after surgery assuming your dressings have already been removed and there are no complications. Do not avoid getting your ears wet but do not let the water hit the ears directly. Do not attempt to get the residual markings off of the ears. This should occur as you continue to shower and allow the shampoo and soap to do this passively.

Diet and Medication Use: After 4-5 days of recovery, you can resume your normal diet. In addition, you can begin taking any medication or supplement that you were restricted from using prior to the surgery.

Exercise: Resuming normal workouts can aggravate swelling in the early recovery period. Therefore, we recommend patients resume exercise in a gradual manner. This means starting off with walking and lite cycling workouts at 10-14 days out from surgery. Keep in mind you will feel some throbbing in the ears as you resume exercise, which is entirely normal. As the weeks go on you can then transition into more vigorous workouts as tolerated. The exception to this is any exercise activity that would risk traumatizing your ears (such as wrestling, jiu jitsu etc.).



OUT OF TOWN PATIENTS

Special considerations

For all of our out of town surgery patients, we recommend you keep in mind some special considerations regarding your local stay.

Choose Your Location Wisely

Ideally you will stay in a hotel or short-term rental that is close to our office. This will make your life much easier on the day of surgery and on the first follow up visit days later. Our office is located in between La Jolla and Del Mar within the city of San Diego. So plan accordingly.

Stocking Up On Food And Drink

One thing that you will not be up to doing is going out to eat during the first 2-3 days of your recovery. Therefore, we recommend you stock your hotel room or short-term rental in advance with several food and drink items. Doing so will obviate the need to go searching for food and drink when you are uncomfortable and in pain. Keep in mind that you should be ingesting high protein content food as this will help your body kick start an optimal healing process.

CARING FOR YOUR INCISIONS

Optimize your wound healing

Taking care of your surgical incisions is an important part of achieving an ideal outcome after lop ear surgery. There is typically an incision running along the back side of the ear.

In a great majority of cases, we will use dissolving sutures in the skin, which do not have to be removed. These will typically absorb away or fall out within 7-10 days as long as you take proper care of the wound.

Proper wound care includes making sure you do NOT develop any scabbing or crusting along the incision. This can be accomplished by cleaning the incision with a Q-tip and soapy water 2-3 times per day during the first 5-7 days after bandage removal. When doing so, simply roll or gently swipe the sutures and incision line with the Q-tip saturated with soapy water. But do NOT bend or move the ear while doing so. You should then carefully apply a thin layer of Bacitracin ointment or Aquaphor (either one can be purchased over-the-counter at your local pharmacy) along the incision line.

After 7-10 days of recovery, we recommend you start using topical silicone gels or exosomes to further optimize wound healing in terms of the scar. These topical products should be used for upwards of 2-3 months after surgery. There are quite a few options at your local pharmacy when it comes to choosing a topical silicone gel for scars. Our office sells the exosomes

During the first year of recovery it is also important that you avoid direct sun exposure on the scars.



FINAL HEALING

You have to be patient

Overall, like so many other surgical procedures, it will take upwards of one (1) full year before you see the final result from the lop ear surgery.

There are some patients who visibly do not show a huge change over the final months of the year. However, from a biological standpoint, it does take that long for full healing.

During this time, you will undoubtedly go through periods of healing where the ear will appear a bit more swollen. This can be affected by exercise, weather and other causes. These are normal observations and do not signify a complication per se.

As the healing process continues to unfold over that year, swelling gradually goes away to reveal a thinner helical contour. The ear will also start to feel less stiff and more pliable to the touch.

It is important that you remain patient and allow the full healing process to take place.



SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

Avoid trauma to the ear

For upwards of one full year after surgery it is very important that you avoid anything that could mechanically traumatize the ear and cause damage. As we discuss with ear surgery patients all the time, this really distills down to basic advice that simply makes logical sense. Keep in mind that all it takes is one inadvertent injury to the ear while it is healing that will compromise the structural integrity and, thus, lead to a suboptimal result.

For instance, you should not be putting a motorcycle helmet on as this could potentially damage the surgical correction - even months out from surgery. In the same spirit, you should avoid wearing something like a dive or swimming mask that could put undue pressure on the ear and compromise the surgical result.

Failure to follow such logical advice may lead to huge regrets on your end and the real likelihood that you will have to undergo revision surgery.

If there is a compelling reason that you absolutely must wear a device or equipment, for example, for occupational purposes, please discuss this with us well in advance. There may be some contingency plan we can fall back on to help mitigate any potential complications.



LET'S TALK ABOUT SCARRING

The good, the bad, the ugly

Like it or not, scarring after surgery is obligatory - everyone gets it! It's impossible to do any type of plastic surgery without scars. But that being said, we do everything we can to make sure those scars look as least visible as possible.

The overwhelming factor when it comes to forming good scars is a patient's genetic predisposition to forming scars. Yes, meticulous surgical technique is certainly a factor. But it is really hard to overcome genetics even with near-perfect technique. A great majority of patients have adequate genetic makeup that allows their body to form good scars that are quite difficult to see even close-up. Unfortunately, there are other patients who simply form bad scars because of their genetics. For example, some patients are prone to developing hypertrophic or keloid scars, which frankly can be quite ugly. If you have had prior surgery or an injury that resulted in such bad scars, there is a high likelihood your ears will form similar scars after lop ear surgery. In this instance, we would likely decline to do your surgery given the risks of unsightly scar formation.

There are instances where a scar heals appropriately, yet it is still more visible than desired. This can occur if the incision line separates slightly during the healing process. If scar tissue also pulls on the incision line in an abnormal fashion, the resulting scar can be more noticeable than desired. In patients where this happens, we would likely recommend some type of scar revision procedure, such as laser treatment or a minor touch-up procedure, to help improve the appearance.



ADDITIONAL MEASURES

Bandage use after lop ear surgery

Once the surgical bandages have been removed a few days after surgery, you will not need to have anything on your ears during the day. However, you will need to wear something around your ears when sleeping. Please note this bandage is NOT intended to be worn to keep pressure on the ears. In fact, I prefer you wear a bandage that is comfortable and not too tight. But it should not slip off easily when sleeping. The reason we recommend lop ear surgery patients wear a bandage at night is to protect the ears from getting inadvertently damaged. For instance, if you roll over onto the ears while sleeping there is a chance you can accidentally clip the ear or traumatize it by bending it at the top. This would likely jeopardize your cosmetic result and could prompt the need for revision surgery.

Most lop ear surgery patients will use a cloth-like wrap to act as their protective bandage, as is shown by example in the adjacent photo. The protective bandage should provide adequate coverage to protect a majority of the ear. Obviously, the upper half of the ear is the most important in terms of coverage. Make sure the bandage is not causing any friction along the ear as you sleep.

As an alternative, we have had patients wear a knit cap while sleeping as long as it is carefully pulled down and over the ears.

This protective bandage should be worn for upwards of 3 months after surgery to help minimize any chance of mechanical trauma to the ear.



CHAPTER SIX

Surgical results



FIND A MORE EXTENSIVE GALLERY

One of the largest galleries of lop ear corrective surgery





Complete reshaping of the helical rim deformity
(individual results will vary)



Complete reshaping of the helical rim deformity
(individual results will vary)



48 hours after lop ear repair
(individual results will vary)



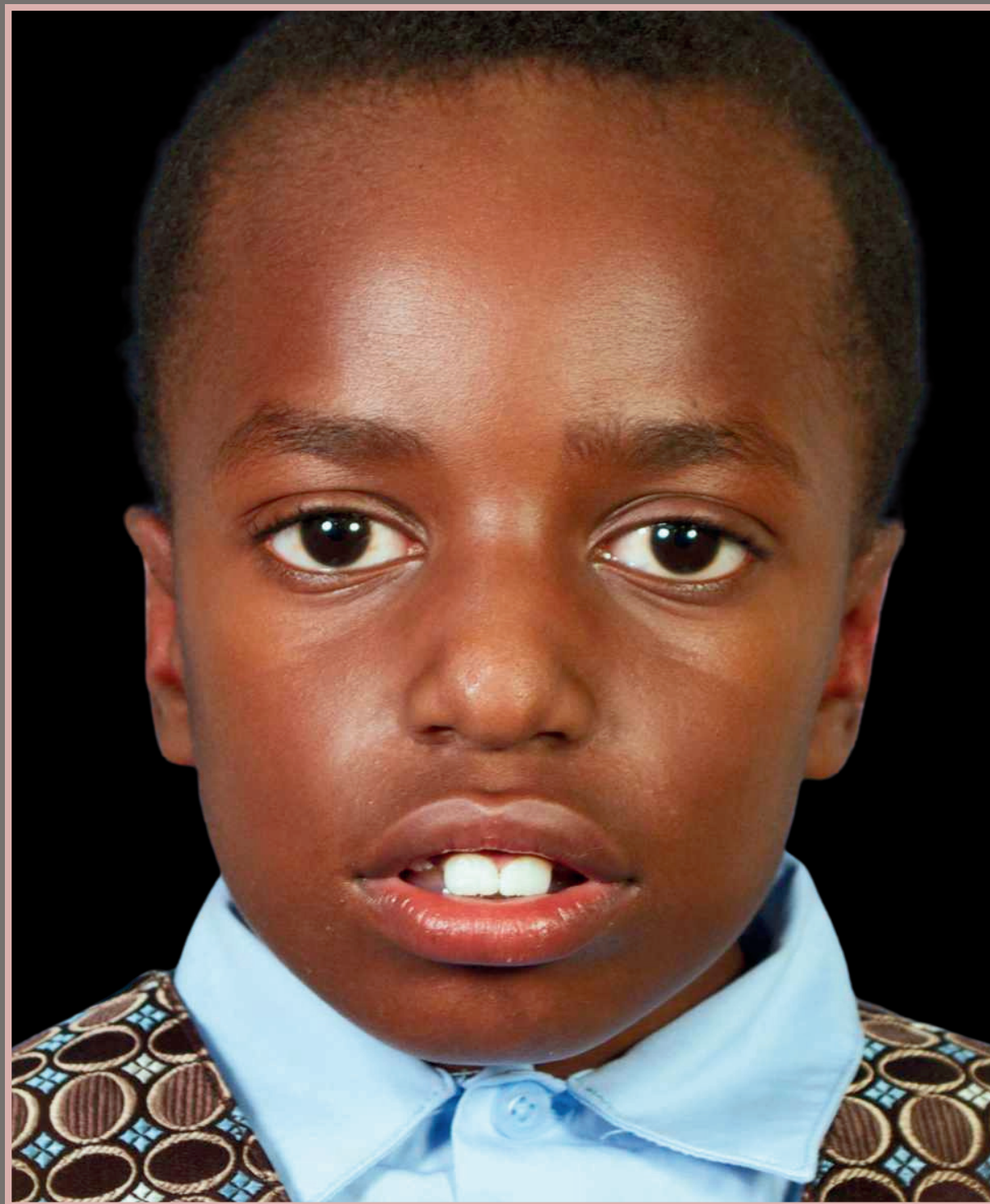
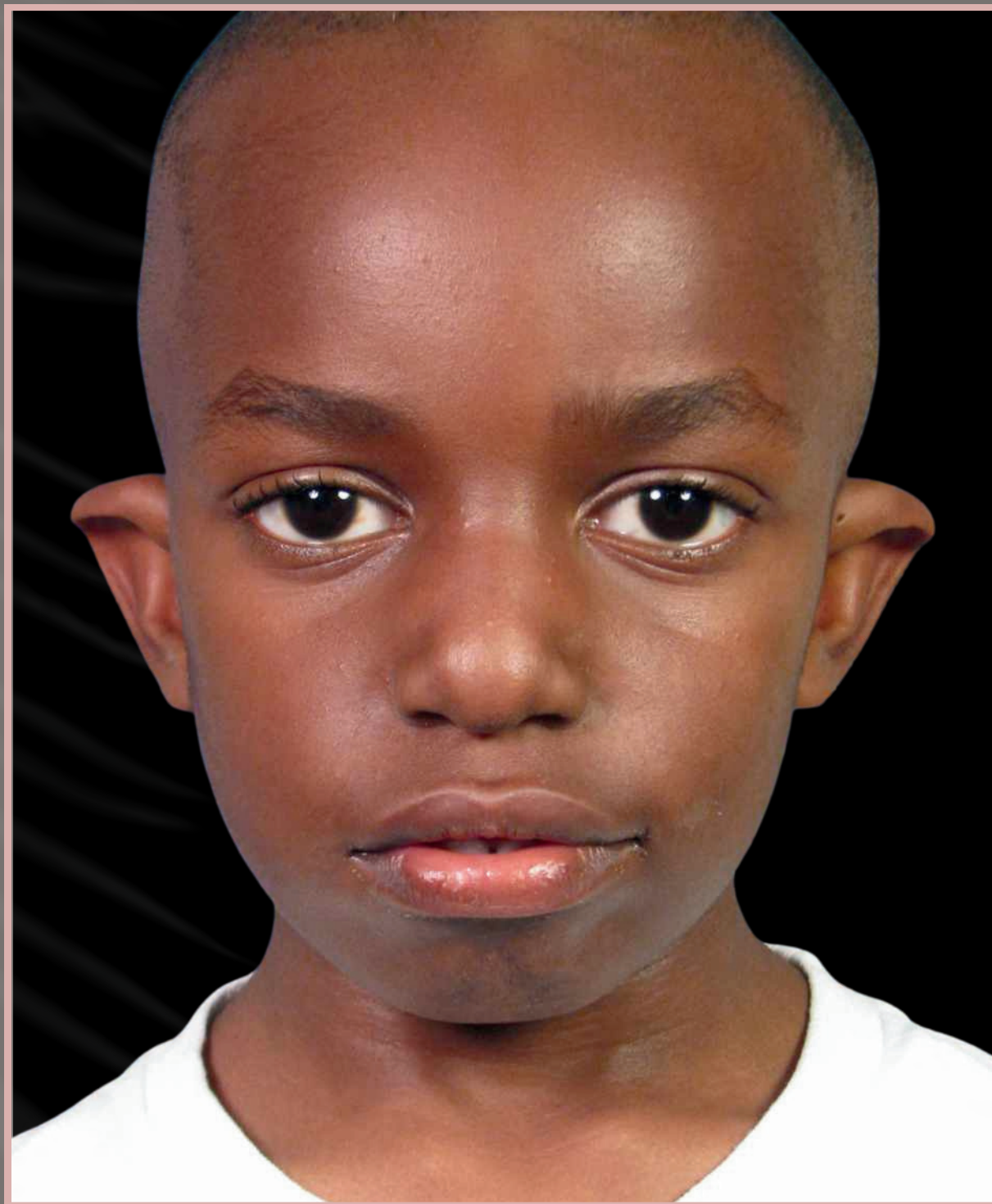
Complete reshaping of the helical rim deformity making it more curved around the ear
(individual results will vary)



Severe lidding of the ear corrected to give a much more natural
looking contour
(individual results will vary)



Severe lidding of the ear corrected to give a much more natural
looking contour
(individual results will vary)



Severe lop ear corrected
(individual results will vary)



Severe lop ear corrected
(individual results will vary)



Mild lop ear repair
(individual results will vary)



Moderately deformed lop ear repair
(individual results will vary)



Moderately deformed lop ear repair. Notice how much taller the ear is now!
(individual results will vary)

READY FOR SURGERY?

Book your appointment today

We truly hope the information provided here has proved to be helpful in your decision-making process.

If you wish to schedule a personalized consultation with our office and/or you are ready to proceed with scheduling corrective surgery, don't hesitate in contacting our office today.

We truly look forward to helping you out in this process.

619-296-3223

www.drhilinski.com

