

This factsheet tells about getting and caring for an ear prosthesis. A prosthesis is a device made to replace a missing human body part.

## How can an ear prosthesis help me?

Plastic surgery to create a new ear can be expensive and challenging. For many patients, the surgery is not an option. A prosthetic ear costs much less than surgery, and it looks almost the same as a real ear.

In addition to giving the appearance of an ear, the prosthesis restores lost functions:

- Improves hearing loss if you had ear canal surgery. Your outer ear helps direct sound waves toward your eardrum. Having both ears also helps you tell what direction sounds come from.
- Allows use of eyeglasses, hearing aids, and oxygen tubes. The prosthesis supports these devices just as a real ear does.

Some patients may have had surgery to build an ear that did not turn out as expected. Sometimes a prosthesis can be made that fits over the reconstruction. We can determine whether a prosthesis will help at your first appointment. This appointment is free.

## Can a child get an ear prosthesis?

People of any age can get a prosthesis. We recommend 4 years as the earliest age for a prosthesis.

## What keeps the prosthesis in place?

Many patients choose to use glue. It takes about 5 minutes each day to put the ear in place. It stays secure all day, even during swimming or other sports.

Some people use clips or magnets that attach to screws placed in the bone. These methods may be more convenient, but they may not be as secure as with glue.

If you choose clips or magnets, you will need surgery to put the screws in place. We will talk with you about this in your first appointment. We can help you find the right surgeon.

You can find instructions for using your prosthesis in these factsheets:

*Using and Caring for Your Facial Prosthesis: Glued*  
*Using and Caring for Your Facial Prosthesis: Implanted*

## Will my insurance cover the costs?

Nearly all insurance plans will cover the cost of a prosthesis. Many plans consider our service as in-network. If your plan's network has no prosthesis provider, we can often qualify as in-network.

## What is the process for making my prosthesis?

Each prosthesis is a unique, custom design made to fit the person wearing it. You come in for three visits:

1. We take impressions of both of your ears so we can make the basic shape for your prosthesis. It takes 30-60 minutes.
2. We fine-tune the basic shape to fit and look right. This can take from 30 minutes to 2 hours.
3. We color the prosthesis to match your skin. This takes 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Usually, the appointments are a few days apart. The prosthesis is ready in about 2 weeks. For patients who travel long distances, we can speed up the process to complete the prosthesis in 3 days.

## What is my prosthesis made of?

We use silicone and polyurethane rubber. These materials are safe for use in medical products. They do not cause allergic reactions.

## How long will my prosthesis last?

Your prosthesis should last 2 or more years with daily wear and proper care.

The original cost includes changes or repairs within 90 days of delivery. We also have a free 2-year repair or replace guarantee.

Insurance will often cover repairs, changes, or replacement from accidental damage.

Learn more at our website: [huntsmancancer.org/prosthetics](https://huntsmancancer.org/prosthetics)

Phone: 801-585-0140

Email: [paul.tanner@hci.utah.edu](mailto:paul.tanner@hci.utah.edu)