# Exostectomy (Surfer's Ear) Surgery

Exostectomy is an advanced microsurgical procedure to remove bony growths (exostoses) from the ear canal, commonly known as "surfer's ear". Dr Nguyen performs this surgery for water sports enthusiasts at The George Cengtre to restore hearing, prevent infections, and allow a safe return to the water.

## When Is Surgery the Right Choice for Surfer's Ear?

The decision to proceed with surgery is made in partnership between you and Dr Nguyen, based on a comprehensive evaluation of your symptoms, the severity of the blockage, and the impact on your quality of life.

**Surgery is typically recommended when:**

* **Hearing loss** significantly affects your daily life or safety in the water.
* You experience **recurrent, painful ear infections** due to trapped water and debris.
* The ear canal is so narrow that it cannot be **effectively cleaned or monitored**.
* **Conservative measures**, like earplugs and drying techniques, are no longer sufficient to manage your symptoms.

**Dr Nguyen's Expert Take:** *"My philosophy is conservative-first. We only consider surgery when the exostoses are genuinely impacting a patient's hearing, causing chronic infections, or preventing them from safely enjoying the water activities they love. I have refined my technique specifically for active patients in the Forster community to ensure the best possible outcome with a clear, structured path back to the water."*

## What to Expect During Your Surgical Journey

### Pre-Operative Planning Excellence

A successful outcome begins with meticulous planning. Your pre-operative consultation at our Forster/Liverpool/Gledswood Hills clinic will include:

* **Advanced Microscopic Examination:** A detailed assessment of your ear canals to map the bony growths.
* **Hearing Assessment (Audiogram):** To establish a baseline of your hearing function.
* **Personalised Surgical Plan:** A discussion of the surgical technique and a clear plan for your recovery, including timelines for returning to work and water sports.

### The Surgical Team and Facility

Your surgery will be performed at The George Centre by a dedicated team experienced in advanced ENT procedures. The team includes a specialist anaesthetist and surgical nurses who are all familiar with Dr Nguyen's specific protocols for exostectomy.

### The Advanced Microsurgical Approach

Dr Nguyen uses a high-powered surgical microscope to achieve meticulous precision, removing the bony growths while carefully preserving the delicate ear canal skin and eardrum. This tissue-preservation technique is crucial for promoting faster healing and achieving the best possible hearing outcomes.

### Bilateral (Both Ears) Surgery

If you have significant exostoses in both ears, Dr Nguyen strongly recommends a staged approach, operating on one ear at a time with a recovery period in between. This approach ensures you always maintain hearing function in one ear during recovery. It also reduces the overall physiological burden on your body and makes the recovery from each procedure more manageable.

## What Is the Recovery Like?

A structured and predictable recovery is key to a successful outcome. Dr Nguyen's protocol is designed to guide you through each phase, from the first week to your full return to the water.

### Pain Management

We use a multimodal pain management approach, starting before your surgery even begins, to ensure you remain as comfortable as possible. While our goal is your comfort, it is important to expect significant discomfort, particularly in the first 3-5 days, which we will manage proactively with a clear medication schedule.

### The Recovery Timeline

* **The First Week:** You will have a protective dressing over your ear and will need to focus on rest. Some hearing fluctuation and a popping sensation are normal. You will have a follow-up appointment with Dr Nguyen at the Forster clinic to have the packing removed.
* **Weeks 2-3:** Your hearing will begin to improve significantly. You can typically return to non-strenuous work, but you must keep the ear completely dry.
* **Weeks 4-6:** The ear canal continues to heal. Flying is generally permitted after the four-week mark, once cleared by Dr Nguyen.

### Return to Water Activities

A safe return to the water is the primary goal for most of our patients.

* **6-8 Weeks:** Depending on your healing progress, you can often return to swimming in clean water, wearing custom-fitted earplugs.
* **8-12 Weeks:** A full return to surfing and diving is typically possible once Dr Nguyen has confirmed complete healing of the ear canal.

**Dr Nguyen's Expert Take:** *"The recovery period is a critical phase where the patient and surgeon work as a team. Strict adherence to the post-operative instructions, particularly keeping the ear dry and following the activity timeline, is the key to a smooth recovery and an excellent long-term outcome. My protocol is designed to get you back in the water safely and as efficiently as possible."*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How successful is exostectomy surgery?

When performed by an experienced ENT surgeon, the procedure has an exceptional success rate. In our practice,

**95-98% of patients** return to their full water sport activities with improved hearing and a dramatic reduction in ear infections.

### Can surfer's ear come back after surgery?

Recurrence is rare. The key to preventing regrowth is the lifelong use of high-quality, custom-fitted earplugs during all cold water activities.

### How long does the surgery take?

The procedure itself typically takes between 2-3 hours.

### Is the surgery painful?

You will be completely asleep under general anaesthesia and will not feel anything during the surgery. Post-operative pain is expected but is managed with a comprehensive pain relief plan.

## Related Resources

### Internal Links

* Conditions - Ear Canal Exostoses (Surfer's Ear) → Learn more about the condition itself.
* Conditions - Recurrent Ear Infections → Understand the link between exostoses and infections.
* Patient Journey → What to expect during your initial consultation process.

### Patient Resources

* Post-surgery care instructions and timeline.
* Guide to custom-fitted earplugs for water sports.
* Tips for keeping your ear dry during recovery.

## Ready to Discuss Your Options?

If chronic ear infections or hearing loss from surfer's ear are affecting your quality of life, a professional evaluation is the next step.

### Next Steps:

[**Schedule Your Surgical Consultation**](https://www.google.com/search?q=tel:phone-number)

*Comprehensive assessment and personalised surgical planning with Dr Nguyen*.

**Contact Information:**

* **Phone:** [Phone number] - Surgical consultation appointments.
* **Online:** [Booking system] - Convenient scheduling for Forster and Mid North Coast residents

### Internal Links

* Treatments - Exostectomy Surgery → Detailed surgical procedure information
* Treatments - Myringoplasty → Eardrum repair for related ear problems
* Conditions - Recurrent Ear Infections → Related ear infection management
* Patient Journey → What to expect during your consultation process