Tympanoplasty (repair perforated ear drum)

A tympanoplasty is a repair of an eardrum. Typically performed to repair an eardrum perforation, it may also be used to strengthen a weakened, retracted eardrum as well.

There are may variations in how this repair is performed, and may be done through through the ear canal, or from behind the ear. Fascia, skin, and cartilage have been used to repair an ear drum. Currently, the gold standard for graft material is fascia (a tough, flat tissue that forms the “wrapper” around one of the chewing muscles) from behind the ear. The graft may be placed under the eardrum, over the eardrum, or between layers of the eardrum, depending on the size and location of the perforation.

Risks of this procedure include failure to heal/reperforation, infection, bleeding, temporary taste disturbance. Rare risks (1%) include injury to hearing, balance, or the facial nerve (nerve that enables motion to the same side of the face). A facial nerve monitor is often used to provide additional protection to this nerve during surgery.

“Children are not small adults” is a particularly relavent when it comes to pediatric ear disease. A thorough knowledge of ear anatomy and development is crucial in deciding when a child is ready to have a perforation repaired. If too aggressive, tympanoplasty may fail to heal or lead to recurrent infection. Determining which techninque is best suited to a specifics of a child’s perforation is also very important to overall success. Working exclusively with children, the physicians of PENTA combine the latest surgical techniques with the experiene to know when a child is ready to go forward with surgery.