

"Sticking-out ears corrected within 90 minutes"

Since she was a child, Nina Nowack (22) suffered from her bat ears. But a unique mini operation without a scalpel has given her new self-confidence.

She never has a pony-tail, pinned-up hair-styles are also a taboo – but Nina's classmates still see that her ears stick out. Some of them tease the girl. Nina herself thinks her ears are ugly and hides them as well as she can, which goes on for a number of years. Nina Nowack from Konstanz (now 22, law student) is afraid of a risky and painful operation. Normally, the auricle is cut open, the cartilage abraded and scored, infections are possible. But then her mother hears of a gentle method without incisions, which Dr. Waldemar Merck (64) has developed. She too has sticking-out ears, is treated by the ENT doctor and specialist for plastic operations. The operation is a great success – and her daughter Nina gains courage: "I'll have that done too."

The specialist examines Nina's ears, explains to her: "We can apply them without bleeding with so-called mattress stitches. When the stitches have healed, no-one can see any more that the ears have been operated. Even experts to whom I have presented the method cannot distinguish between normal and operated ears. The risk of an infection is slight, the operation is done ambulantly."

In October 2004, the time had come, Nina went to the practice for her operation appointment. The ENT doctor treats Nina's ears with a specific cream so that the anaesthetic injection does not hurt. Then, Nina does not notice anything about the operation. She is completely alert, can even follow the operations on both ears with a mirror and can thus also have a say in how far the doctor applies the auricle to the head.

Dr. Merck uses a special needle to pull synthetic threads under the skin and connects them in such a way that a natural looking new fold results. In this way, the auricle is given a normal shape again, the ear which stuck out before is now put into the correct position. The doctor does not need to cut, and unlike the conventional method there are no scars left on the ear afterwards. Five stitches are enough, they heal after a few days.

This is why this method is particularly suited for children. Normally, they are operated on before they start school or in Classes 1 or 2.

Nina's operation on both sides takes about 90 minutes, and then she is allowed to go home straight away. After two days, the stitches have healed to such an extent that Nina can wash her hair: "Shortly after the operation, I felt a weak sensation of tenseness, but that has eased off in the meantime".

Today, Nina Nowack enjoys her new life: "The feeling of looking normal is simply wonderful. And at last I can have the hair-style I want – simply to match my mood!"

The correction on both sides costs 2,660 Euro. For children under 14 years of age, private health insurance schemes pay for the intervention.

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