

Help for protruding ears

In Konstanz, ears are being fastened with a new method

KONSTANZ (sda) Just fastening protruding ears to the head, thereby correcting a blemish; this is the dream of many people who suffer from protruding ears. The Konstanz doctor Waldemar-Heinz Merck is doing precisely this with great success.

Even if people afflicted with protruding ears have found a prominent comrade in suffering in Prince Charles, most are dissatisfied with their lot. But until recently, anyone who wanted to have the position of their ears corrected had to submit to a risky and painful procedure.

The ear cartilage is cut open, shaved off, and injected to ensure that the ear would always lie flat. However, this procedure is not without risks, since infections often occur. Infections are difficult to fight because cartilage has poor circulation and is thus not very accessible to medication.

Without cartilage operation

The Konstanz ENT doctor Waldemar-Heinz Merck has now developed a method with which the operation lasts only two hours and with which fewer complications occur: he effectively binds the ears backwards.

Merck was inspired by a method discovered in Israel, with which the cartilage is reduced, but then the ears were fastened with a special stitching technique. Merck asked himself whether it would not be sufficient to place a stitch in the inner ear fold, thus holding the ear fast so that the stitch holds the ear pressed in next to the head.

Four years ago, he began experimenting. Since then, he has treated several hundred patients successfully. "It worked every time," reports Merck proudly. In no case has the nylon thread torn.

Requests without end

During the operation, Merck uses a needle to place several stitches, so-called "mattress stitches," under the skin. Before the stitch is knotted behind the ear, the patient can decide how close to the head the ears should lie. Only then is the knot made permanent. The small cuts behind the ear that make room for the nylon knots heal after just a few days. Since reports about Merck's technique have been broadcast across Germany in the press and on TV, the clinic where the attending physician works can hardly save itself from the inquiries.

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