

Auricular hematoma: management in the emergency department

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Otohematoma (Figure 1) is the accumulation of blood between the cartilage and the perichondrium of the ear pavilion, usually as a result of recent blunt trauma, but sometimes days before and the event may not be remembered by the patient. Physical examination shows bluish, soft, painless and fluctuating tumefaction. Treatment consists of fine-needle aspiration of the hematoma and then placement of gauze soaked in antibiotic ointment which is adapted to the anatomical

folds and covered with a compression bandage. If this method is not effective or more than 7 days have passed, incision along one of the normal folds is recommended, followed by drainage. In all cases antibiotic treatment should be initiated to prevent perichondritis, and cloxacillin is agent of choice. Without correct treatment, prognosis worsens due to cartilage ischemia and the risk of perichondritis, with subsequent deformity known as "cauliflower ear".



Figure 1. Surgical resolution of an otohematoma in the Emergency Department.

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