

OTOSCLEROSIS



What is Otosclerosis?

Otosclerosis is a disease that affects the small bones in the middle ear (known as the ossicles).

It causes the bones of the middle ear around the footplate of the stapes to harden. Otosclerosis restricts the movement of the stapes and stiffens the whole ossicular chain (or the middle ear bones). This makes it difficult for sound waves to pass to the inner ear.

The most common symptom is a gradual hearing loss.

Who gets it?

The disease often starts around the age of the age of 30. It affects more women than men. In women, the condition can deteriorate significantly during pregnancy. The disease can run also in families in about 70 per cent of cases.

Treatment

Hearing aids can be useful if you have otosclerosis. Many people manage very well with a hearing aid, although it cannot restore hearing.

An alternative to hearing aids is a surgical operation called a stapedectomy. This operation is performed under a general anaesthetic, and the stapes is replaced with a tiny which allows the sound waves to penetrate the inner ear again. The operation has a high success rate although there are some risks, which you should discuss with your surgeon.

The operation is rarely performed on both ears. The operation can restore hearing to a level which would not require a hearing aid.

For more information and advice on otosclerosis contact your GP or Hearing Therapist.