

Definitions

Microtia is an incomplete or underdeveloped external ear. Microtia may affect one ear only (unilateral) or affect both ears (bilateral). It is a congenital condition that occurs in one in 6,000 births world-wide. Microtia is often accompanied by atresia because a baby's outer ear and the ear canal develop together during pregnancy.

Atresia is the absence of an external ear canal and, in some instances the ear drum and ear bones can also be affected. As there is no canal for sound to travel through, this means that children with atresia are born with a conductive hearing loss.

MICROTIA AND ATRESIA FACTS:

- Microtia is a condition characterised by an incomplete or underdeveloped ear. It literally comes from the Latin words "micro" (small) and "otia" (ear).
- Aural atresia is the absence or closure of the ear canal. Most patients with microtia also have atresia.
- Atresia results in a level of hearing loss.
- In the majority of cases the cause of microtia is still unknown. Microtia is a congenital birth defect - which means it is present from birth.
- Occasionally microtia appears to be genetically inherited. However, most of the time it is a one-off condition that the child with microtia will not pass on to their own children.
- Microtia occurs in about 1 in every 6,000 - 10,000 births worldwide.
- Microtia is more common in males.
- Microtia can affect one ear (unilateral) or both ears (bilateral). It occurs unilaterally in 90% of cases.
- In unilateral cases, it occurs more often on the right side than the left.
- The chances of having another child with microtia is less than 6%.