



## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Dr Zenia Chow** MBBS(hons), FRACS  
Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon  
Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgeon

Dr. Zenia Chow takes great pride in providing a quality patient experience. We are here to cater to your concerns and to make your experience as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. Below is some basic information on what is involved with your consultation and surgery.

### **Initial Consultation**

You must have a current referral for your consultation. Most GP referrals are valid for 12 months and must be renewed if there are any consultations beyond this period. Specialist referrals, such as those from a Paediatrician or another ENT Surgeon, are only valid for 3 months. You do not need Private Health insurance to see Dr. Chow.

The current schedule of fees will be discussed with you at the time of booking your appointment. Additional fees will apply if other procedures e.g. endoscopic examination, ear toilet is required. For your convenience, we offer Credit Card and EFTPOS facilities (Amex is not accepted). An up-to-date referral is required to receive a Medicare rebate. Your private health fund will NOT rebate any consultation fees.

Please note that Dr. Chow works in private practice and does not Bulk Bill. It is the policy of Dr. Chow's practice to require FULL payment on the day of consultation. If you anticipate you will not be able to pay for the full consultation, please ask your GP to refer you to an ENT Outpatient Clinic at any major public hospital.

### **Things to bring to your consultation**

- Referral (or confirmation that your doctor has sent one on your behalf via fax or email) – we prefer if referrals are sent to the office prior to the consultation to facilitate triaging the urgency of the problem
- List of current medications, past medical history especially facial/ENT surgery
- Relevant Xrays, CT scans, MRI scans – report and **hard copy** films or CD
- Test results, including hearing tests
- Medicare Card
- Private Health Insurance Card (if applicable)
- Forms (Privacy Consent Form, Patient Registration Form), filled out and signed – if these have not been completed, please come to your appointment at least 10 mins earlier than scheduled to ensure you have time to fill out the paperwork
- Method of payment

## **SURGERY**

### **Private**

The benefits of this are that you are guaranteed Dr. Chow will be your surgeon, and the date of surgery can be arranged at a mutually convenient time – usually within a few weeks. There are two ways to proceed with this option depending on whether you have Private Health Insurance or not. Please double check with your health fund if you are covered for surgical, anaesthetic, pathology/radiology and hospital fees. If you are eligible, your policy will cover some of the costs of the surgeon's fee.

The other way in which to proceed privately is as a self-funded private patient. There are generally three costs involved – the surgeon's fee (Dr. Chow's fee), anaesthetist's fee and the hospital's fee. You will receive some rebate from the surgeon and anaesthetist's fee from Medicare, although less than if you were privately insured.

A quote can be provided for your surgery, although this may not be readily

available until the days after the consultation. Administrative staff will be in contact with you about the fees and process for booking for surgery. Full payment of surgical fees is required before the surgery.

Please note there is some variability in fees charged by different hospitals and different anaesthetists. The administration staff will provide you with information on these costs. There may be an additional fee if any Pathology specimens are sent to the Pathology laboratory for tests. It can be difficult to predict if this will be required and so this is not usually included in the quote you receive.

### **Public**

If you decide to proceed with surgery in a public hospital, you may be referred to the waiting list of The Austin or Northern Hospital where Dr. Chow operates. If you wish to have your surgery at another public hospital, please ask your GP to refer you to a surgeon who works there or directly to the ENT Outpatient Clinic of the hospital.

Cosmetic surgery is not performed in public hospitals.

If you are placed on the waiting list for surgery at a public hospital, you need to be aware that waiting times are involved. Operations are classified as 'Urgent' – within 30 days, 'Semi-urgent' – within 3 months and 'Non-urgent' – within 12 months, but there can be some variability to this. If you are placed on the waitlist, it will not guarantee Dr. Chow will perform the surgery, or even that she will be present at the time of your surgery. In order to utilise public operating lists effectively, patients may be operated on by other surgeons, including appropriately trained/supervised Trainee Surgeons (Registrars). Dr. Chow does not have control of the waitlist. Please liaise with the ENT waitlist nurse at the hospital to enquire about when your operation may be scheduled.

### **Before Surgery**

It is important that an adult accompanies you to drive you home after surgery, even if your surgery is performed under local anaesthetic.

Avoid blood thinners eg aspirin, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) and fish oil for 10 days prior to your surgery. If you have a history of heart

problems or stroke and require blood thinners, please notify Dr. Chow so alternative arrangements can be made.

Avoid alcohol for 24 hours prior to your surgery, as alcohol can interfere with the anaesthetic.

Avoid smoking and recreational drugs for at least 3 weeks before surgery as you risk of complications and mortality increase.

You will be notified when to fast depending on the day and time of your surgery.

Wear comfortable, casual clothing and no makeup. If you feel unwell before your surgery, please call Dr. Chow's practice. Dr. Chow and her anaesthetist will decide if it is safe to proceed with surgery. If necessary, we may need to reschedule your surgery.

### **Tips for Your Child's ENT Surgery**

One parent or guardian will be allowed to accompany your child into the operating theatre. After your child is anaesthetised, you will be ushered into a waiting area until your child is in the recovery room whereby a nurse will call you to be reunited with your child.

- Bring your child's favourite toy or blanket with you to the hospital
- Bring your child's favourite bottle if your child is an infant. Also bring extra nappies and underwear. If your child requires a special diet, please bring to the hospital.
- Use imaginary play to demonstrate things that will happen before surgery. For example, you can demonstrate putting a mask on your child's favourite doll.
- Your child will need to rest after surgery. Take things that your child can play with while recovering such as colouring books. Avoid exertional activity after surgery.
- Be honest with your child. Do not lie about the possibility of needles or pain associated with the operation.

## **On the day of surgery**

Take your regular medication apart from blood thinners (unless instructed to do so).

Please arrive on time at the hospital. You will be guided to the preoperative area once you have signed in and registered. You will then be asked to change into a gown and your clothes will be placed in a locker. Your blood pressure, temperature and pulse will be taken. A nurse will take a health history. There are multiple checks/questions by different staff to confirm your identity, procedure and medical history before the operation to ensure your safety. You will be asked the same questions multiple times and will also have a chance to speak with Dr. Chow and the anaesthetist before the surgery. Your cooperation and patience is much appreciated. We are all here to provide a satisfying and efficient service for you.

Post-surgical instructions will be given to you or your family by nurses. If any problems should occur after your surgery, please contact Dr. Chow's rooms.

## **After Surgery**

Patients must not drive, work or use any dangerous machinery for at least 48 hours following anaesthesia. Please ensure you have someone driving you home regardless of whether you have day surgery or not.

No alcohol or sedatives should be taken in this period as well. Eat and drink lightly after arriving home. Most people can return to work after a few weeks but double check with Dr. Chow about any physical restrictions depending what surgery you will be having.

For paediatric patients staying overnight, one parent is allowed to stay in the same room.

If you start to run out of pain medication, please call your GP first or Dr. Chow's office for a prescription in advance during office hours as some medications can only be dispensed with an original hard copy prescription and not faxed copies. Please do not wait until you have only 1-2 tablets remaining as Dr. Chow will not be available to provide a prescription urgently.

Should any problems or questions arise, please call or email Dr. Chow's rooms during office hours, and she will endeavour to answer you as soon as possible. If you experience any emergencies eg excessive bleeding, please call an ambulance or go to the Austin Hospital emergency department where an ENT doctor is oncall 24 hours a day.