

AN IDEAL DONOR SITE FOR THE AURICULAR COMPOSITE GRAFT

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SINCE the original publications in 1946 by Brown and Cannon, Brown *et al.*, and Dupertuis, composite grafts for full thickness replacement of the alar margins of the nose are commonly obtained from the body of the helix or the earlobe. Neither is

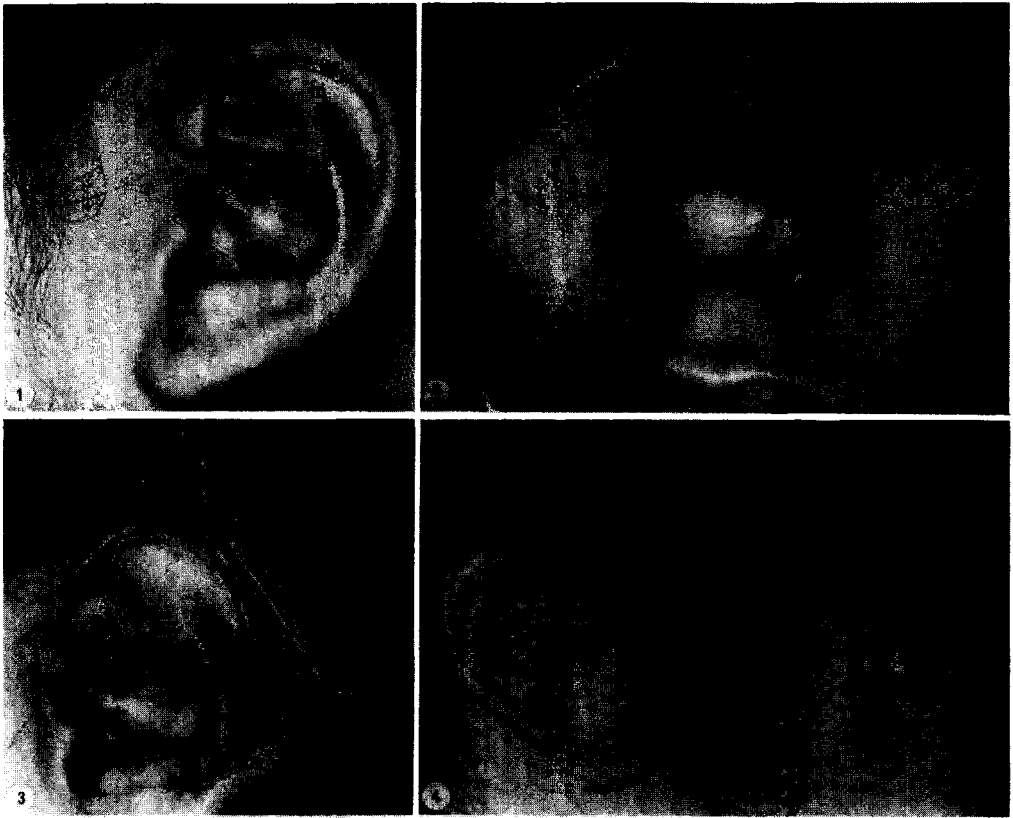


FIG. 1. The area of anterior helix most closely matching the defect is chosen.

FIG. 2. Graft in place showing how well this part of the helix conforms to the curves of the alar rim.

FIG. 3. Chondrocutaneous flap to rotate the remaining helix into the defect.

FIG. 4. Healed result.

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wholly satisfactory. Posterior helical rim excisions are not always easily closed without permanent deformity and the cartilage is often too acutely curled to match the flatter contour of the ala. The earlobe without cartilage is flabby and while occasionally suitable for columellar grafts does not simulate the texture and contour of the alar margin.

In my opinion the ideal site is the anterior helix just below the level where the ear joins the scalp. The rim has the correct curvature to fit almost any part of the alar margin and the defect can be closed with virtually no deformity.

TECHNIQUE

The curvature of the rim of the anterior helix varies slightly and that most closely matching the defect is chosen (Figs. 1 and 2). The defect is closed by a modification of the technique described by Antia and Buch (1967). The remaining helix is advanced on a pedicle of medial auricular skin which is fully freed from the ear cartilage. The lateral incision is placed high in the sulcus between helix and scapha so that the scar is quite hidden (Figs. 3 and 4).

When the width of the graft exceeds 1 cm, advancement may cause slight cupping of the foreshortened helix (Fig. 5). This tendency can be overcome by trimming the scaphal cartilage as illustrated in Figure 6.

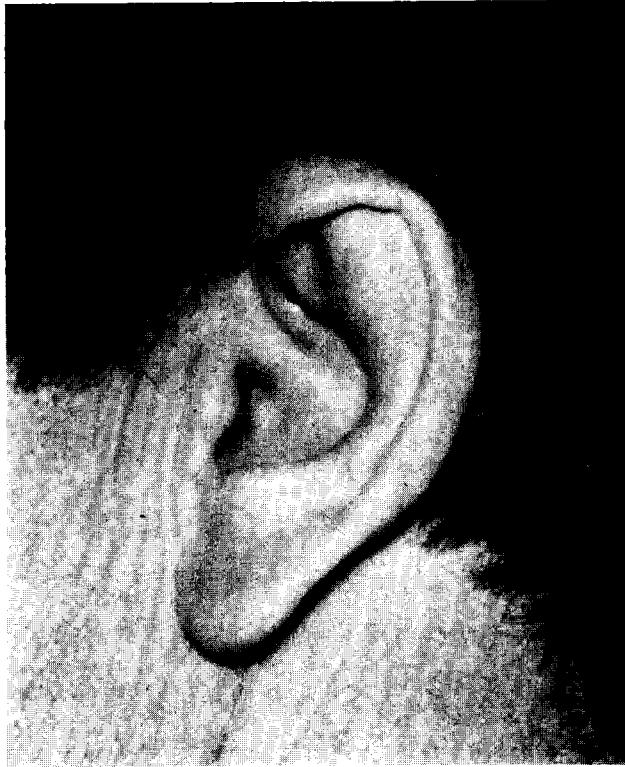


FIG. 5. With defects of more than 1 cm, advancement of the helix may cause slight cupping.

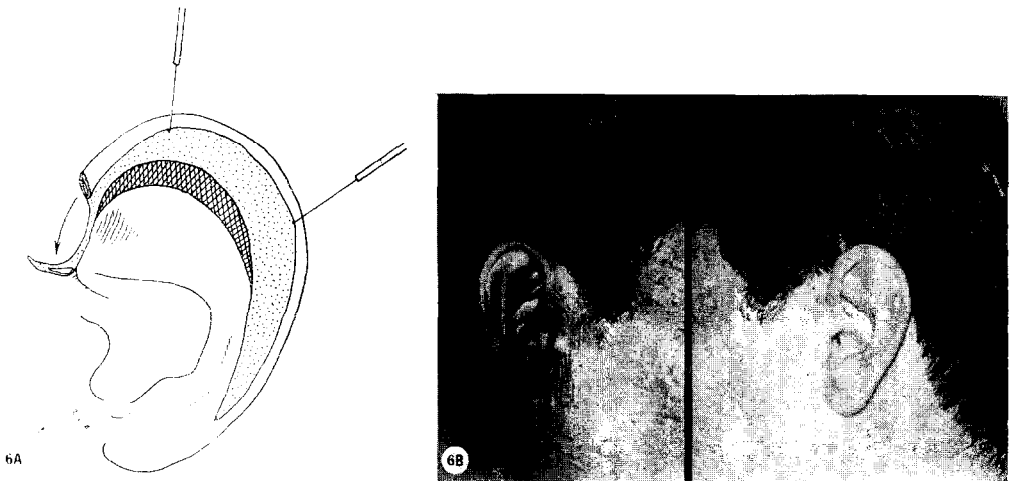


FIG. 6. A, Cupping of the helix may be avoided by trimming some of the scaphal cartilage (cross hatched).
B, Healed result.

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