

IMAGES IN CLINICAL MEDICINE

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Ear Replantation



A 19-YEAR-OLD WOMAN PRESENTED WITH AMPUTATION OF HER LEFT EAR by a pit bull (Panels A and B). The patient's tetanus vaccination and the dog's rabies vaccination were up to date. The ear was débrided and replanted by microvascular anastomosis of a 0.3-mm branch of the posterior auricular artery. Since no suitable veins were found, medicinal leeches (*Hirudo medicinalis*) provided venous drainage for 17 days (Panel C). Ciprofloxacin was administered as prophylaxis against *Aeromonas hydrophila* bacteria, which are found in a leech's digestive tract. Aspirin and heparin, followed by enoxaparin, were administered to prevent thrombosis. The patient recovered without complications. The ear did not lose viability, and 24 days postoperatively, a normal appearance had been restored (Panel D); 4 months postoperatively, the result was stable and the normal appearance was maintained. Although advances have been made in bioengineering and allogeneic transplantation of facial structures, replantation of a patient's own tissue is ideal when possible.

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