

Clear Talk

Options for Pierced Ears that are Stretched or Torn

Diamond studs. Gold hoops. Chandelier baubles in an array of dangling colors. We women love earrings. But over time, many of us experience earring holes that stretch and sag, leaving us unable to wear our favorite earrings. Precious anniversary studs droop unattractively from our ears. Worse still, many of us experience stretched earring holes that tear completely. So where do you go for help? **Dr. Heather Haley of Haley Dermatology Group** explains how she and her partner, **Dr. Laura Cepeda**, provide ear lobe restoration for both sagging and torn pierced ears.



Dr. Heather Haley



Dr. Laura Cepeda

V&N: So are these common problems for women of all ages?

Dr. Haley: Absolutely! I see young women in my practice who've worn large, heavy earrings and are already experiencing stretched, drooping holes. Mothers of young children often become "victims" of their kids' curious hands—pulling their earrings to the point of tearing the hole. And then women in their 50s and older often complain that they can't wear their nice anniversary studs because one earring is lower than the other or droops, pointing unattractively to the ground.

V&N: What options do women have for stretched or widened earring holes that no longer support earrings?

Dr. Haley: With the use of dermal fillers such as JUVEDERM® or RESTYLANE, we can revitalize and add support to the elongated earring hole. It's a simple, in-office procedure that takes only a few minutes. We apply topical numbing cream beforehand, so most women say it's painless. There's no downtime either—you can wear earrings of any size in the hole when you leave our office.

V&N: Sounds easy. Is it expensive and how long does it last?

Dr. Cepeda: Depending on the extent of support needed, it costs between \$275 and \$500. It's not covered by insurance. Everyone should get at least a year out of the filler, but I have had many people get much longer since they tend to be more careful after they see how great their earrings can look.

V&N: So you experience the benefit immediately? And you can instantly wear dangling, even heavy earrings again?

Dr. Haley: Yes. The support to the pierced ear hole is immediate. And we can customize the hole's shape to make it even with the other ear's hole.

V&N: What about women whose earring hole is torn, preventing them from wearing pierced earrings? What are their options?

Dr. Cepeda: Restoring ear lobes is an in-office surgical procedure that takes approximately 30 minutes. We actually remove the existing torn skin and then place stitches to allow the skin to heal together. Patients are advised to let the ear heal for 6 months before re-piercing.

V&N: When re-piercing, do you advise they pierce the earlobe in a different location?

Dr. Haley: Yes. It's best to re-pierce slightly above the previous earring hole. This provides additional support.

V&N: That sounds a bit more involved, how much does this procedure cost?

Dr. Haley: Repair for torn ear lobes is \$330 for one ear, or \$550 for two if done at the same time. Again, insurance doesn't cover the procedure.

V&N: So protecting the earring hole and preventing a stretch or tear is probably best. Any advice?

Dr. Cepeda: Many people complain of just some looseness on one side. I think this may be from cell phone usage. So, it is best to not put a great deal of pressure on the ear when talking on the phone. Also, if you have young children stick with smaller earrings. Those curious little hands have ripped many large hoops out and torn the earlobe at the same time.

V&N: So, if you have this problem and did not know where to turn for help, now you know. Call Haley Dermatology Group in Fairhope, AL at 251-928-3844.

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