

Orthognathic (jaw) surgery

Orthodontics Department Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

If you are considering having orthodontic treatment and jaw surgery, you may have a number of questions. This leaflet aims to answer some of those questions.

Why might I need surgery?

In order to correct the position of the teeth and provide a functioning bite, the supporting bones of the jaws must be in the correct position. If this is not the case, orthodontic treatment alone will not correct the bite. You will need surgery to move the jaws into the proper position so the teeth will then meet correctly.

If I need jaw surgery, why do I also require orthodontic treatment?

If your jaws are to be moved into the correct position, it is important your teeth are moved first, for example, by wearing a brace, so that they will meet properly after surgery.

What type of brace will I need to wear?

Fixed braces are used before jaw surgery because they give the most accurate positioning of the teeth before you have the operation.

Are the braces removed before the operation?

No, the braces remain in place during and after the operation for a number of months. During the operation, they help the surgeon to position the jaws correctly. After the operation, they help the orthodontist fine tune the bite with the aid of dental elastic bands.

How will the operation be done?

In general, the operation will be done from inside your mouth. The jaw is broken and moved into the correct position. It will be held there with dental elastic bands or wires. The details of your specific operation will be discussed with you in detail when you have your meeting with the oral and maxillofacial surgeon.

Will my jaws be wired together?

Some patients who have jaw surgery may have their teeth wired together for six to eight weeks afterwards. However, this is now unusual as small metal plates are used to hold the fracture sites together. These plates are on the surface of the bone but beneath the skin and usually remain in place forever. Very occasionally, they are removed at a later date.

How long will I be in hospital?

This varies but in general between three to five days.

Can I eat normally?

Before the operation

Until the operation you should be able to eat normally. For your orthodontic treatment to work well and in the shortest possible time, it is important you take care of your teeth and brace. In order to prevent damage to both, you should avoid the following:

- Toffees, boiled sweets, chewing gum and chocolate bars.
- Fizzy drinks including diet drinks and large amounts of fruit juice.
- Hard foods which might damage the brace such as crunchy apples, crusty bread rolls etc.

Hard foods can be eaten with **care** if you cut them up first.

After the operation

After the operation you will have to follow a liquid diet for the first few weeks. The dietitian at the hospital will give you information about this nearer the time.

Are there any after effects?

You will have some swelling and bruising after the operation which will disappear over the first two to three weeks.

For operations on the lower jaw, it is fairly common to have some numbness of the lower lip for some weeks or months afterwards. Very rarely, a small area of numbness will remain. This numbness will not affect movement of your lip, only the feeling in it, in a similar way to an injection at the dentist.

After you have had the operation, you will have to take it easy for the first week or two afterwards. Therefore, you should expect to be off college or work for at least two weeks.

Will I look very different after the operation?

You will almost certainly look different to some degree but this will depend on your specific operation. You should discuss this with your orthodontist, and oral and maxillofacial surgeon.

How long will the overall treatment take?

It usually takes 36 months but will vary according to how severe your case is so treatment may take longer to complete. It will take longer if the brace keeps breaking or if you cancel or do not attend appointments.

How often will I need an appointment?

You will need frequent and regular appointments with the orthodontist during treatment for the brace to be adjusted.

Do I still need to see my regular dentist?

Yes. It will be important you still have check-ups with your regular dentist throughout orthodontic treatment. Your orthodontist will not be checking your teeth for decay.

Can I find out more?

The following websites have more information about orthognathic surgery:

[British Orthodontic Society – jaw surgery](#)

[British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons – jaw surgery](#)

If you have any further questions that you would like to ask, please write them down and bring them with you to your next appointment. It is important you fully understand what is involved in having orthodontic treatment before you decide to go ahead.

Please use this space for any notes you may wish to make:

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Orthodontic department on 01384 244719 (9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/orthodontics/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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