

Jaw Surgery

Information Leaflet

Jaw surgery

The aim of this leaflet is to prepare you for your up coming jaw surgery.

The surgery itself will be carried out under **General Anaesthetic** (asleep) in hospital.

You will be required to stay in hospital for **1-2 nights** depending on your recovery.

After your operation, you will need time off work/university to recover. This time off varies from **3 – 8 weeks** and usually depends on each individual and the type of work you do. It is not unusual to feel lacking in energy for several weeks after your operation.

In the weeks/months following your operation, you will need to attend a number of appointments with your orthodontist and your surgeon so they may monitor your progress.

Pre-surgery appointment schedule

Once you have completed your presurgical orthodontics and are ready to proceed with jaw surgery you will be required to attend a number of appointments:

1. Planning appointment

You will need to attend an appointment **2-4 weeks before your operation.**

At this appointment you will be seen by your surgeon(s):

- To confirm final surgical plan
- To answer any questions you may have
- To discuss with you all the symptoms which you may experience after the procedure. It is important to listen carefully and take these on board so that you are fully prepared.
- To complete a consent form with you
- To have impressions taken
- To take measurements of your jaw
- To have pre-surgery x-rays and photographs taken

2. Pre-assessment appointment

Several days before your operation, you will need to attend an appointment to have pre-anaesthetic checks carried out. You will be seen by a nurse at this appointment.

You may also be seen by one of the surgical team who will assess the fit of your moulds (these will be used during the operation by your surgeon).

Starving instructions

As your operation will be carried out under General Anaesthetic, you cannot have anything to eat/drink for a number of hours before your operation. These instructions will be sent to you prior to your admission and it is very important to follow these instructions.

Take your regular medication as normal unless otherwise told by your surgeon or pre-admission nurse.

Day of Operation

It is very important to be well rested before you come to hospital for your operation.

You must ensure you arrive on time for your operation. Traffic can be busy in the mornings so please ensure you make allowances for this.

You will receive a letter from the hospital to inform you where to come on the day.

Useful items to bring:

- Headphones
- Mobile phone
- Eye masks
- Ear plugs
- A pen & paper/small whiteboard & marker
- Dressing gown / pyjamas

The Anaesthetist will come to see you in the morning before your operation and explain the anaesthetic procedure to you. If you have any questions regarding the anaesthetic or the post-operative pain relief they will be happy to answer these.

Your surgeon will also see you to ensure you are happy and to confirm your consent.

You may go to theatre from your hospital bed (if your room is ready) or directly from the admissions lounge. The nurses will ensure that you know what to do with your belongings.

After your operation

Immediately after your operation, you will be cared for in the recovery area in the theatre suite. The staff here will monitor you for a period of time before you are ready to be transferred to the ward.

You will be asked to lie propped up with pillows in bed whilst in hospital. This helps reduce the amount of swelling and helps with your comfort. You may also need to wear an oxygen mask for some of the time after the operation.

When you are on the ward you will be encouraged drink fluids immediately and eat the following day. Both are important in your recovery and your progress will influence when you can go home.

A syringe can be very useful to help you drink fluids after the operation. This will be provided on the ward.

There will be a nurse to assist you on the ward at all times – if you require anything do not hesitate to ask them.

What to expect after your operation:

Pain

You will receive medication to prevent any pain which you may experience. This may be given by mouth or through a vein. If you do have any pain please inform your nurse. When at home you will be given painkilling medications to take by mouth. These can be in liquid or dissolvable form. You should take this medication regularly for the first 1-2 weeks after your operation

Swelling & Bruising

This will be most noticeable 24hrs after your operation. After 48hrs, it will gradually reduce in size but it may take several weeks to completely disappear. You may expect bruising on your neck and the top of your chest also – this is normal.

Numbness

You **will** experience numbness/loss of feeling of some part of your face/lip/chin/tongue when you wake up. This will partly be due to the local anaesthetic used during your surgery and partly as a result of your surgery. The feeling may take several weeks or months before it returns to normal and in some instances, the numbness can be permanent (this will have been discussed with you at your previous consultation appointments). You may experience tingling before it fully returns.

Blocked Nose

A blocked nose & blood stained fluid from your nose and mouth for several days after your operation is normal.

Sickness

This can be a side effect of the general anaesthetic. If it does occur, we have medication that can help. Please inform your nurse if you do feel sick. Occasionally, the painkilling medicines taken at home (codeine) may cause some nausea/sickness particularly if you are not able to eat.

Discomfort in throat

This is a common complaint in the first 24hrs after the operation. It may be from the anaesthetic tube or secretions at the back of your throat. Fluids will help relieve this so make sure you drink enough fluids.

Feeling down

This is often a normal response to having an operation. Don't worry, this feeling will pass as you recover from your operation.

Medication

Below is a list of the usual medication we will prescribe you after your operation. This may vary depending on the operation & your medical history:

- Pain relief – Paracetamol, Ibuprofen, Codeine phosphate
- Antibiotics – usually 2 doses given in hospital
- Steroids (to reduce inflammation & Swelling) – usually 2 doses given in hospital
- Mouthwash

All medication will be given in liquid form to take by mouth or through a vein in your hand (if in hospital).

It is important to take all the medication you are prescribed to prevent post operative complications.

Before you leave hospital

We are aware that most patients prefer to recover in the comfort of their own home. Therefore, once you are drinking enough fluids, eating and able to move around we will be happy for you to go home.

Before you leave hospital you will be seen by your surgeon(s) - to assess that you are fit for discharge & to discuss your follow up.

You may also have X-rays taken after your jaw surgery before you leave the hospital.

You will be sent home with a **post op pack** containing:

- Your medication
- Your follow up details
- A copy of this leaflet
- A syringe to aid feeding, if necessary

It is important you have someone to care for you at home as you will need help for at least 1 week after your operation.

Most patients feel reassured when someone is at home to help with even basics things such as eating, showering etc.

Diet

Healthy nutrition is an essential part of your recovery process.

For 4-6 weeks after your operation you will be eating **soft** foods only.

There is the option to take home some build up drinks which you will have been drinking in hospital - most patients find these useful.

A **syringe** can be used when eating and they can be provided by your nurse - some patients find looking in a mirror when using the syringe helpful.

Examples of soft/purée food:

- Eggs, porridge, soup, mashed potato, avocado, purée carrot/parsnip, mashed banana
- Smoothies, fresh fruit & vegetable juices, yoghurt (Greek), jelly (sugar free), milk, water

Weight loss is common and sometimes unavoidable after this operation therefore it is important to ensure you eat well.

You should avoid alcohol for the duration of your recovery.

Your surgeon will let you know at your follow up appointments when you may begin with solid foods.

Oral hygiene

This is very important to ensure complete healing after your operation & to avoid complications.

It will be difficult & may be tender but you must brush **twice daily** with a small headed soft toothbrush.

It is very unlikely that you will disturb anything in your mouth so do not avoid brushing.

Use the mouthwash provided twice daily, as well as warm salt water rinses 3 times a day.

The stitches in your mouth will dissolve.

Avoid smoking as this can delay healing.

Your orthodontist will arrange for your braces to be removed when appropriate.

In most cases, we will place elastic bands from your top teeth to your bottom teeth on each side after your operation to guide your teeth into their new position - if they break you must replace them - we will send you home with spares but if you have any difficulty get in contact with us. Your surgeon will decide when your elastics are to be removed.

Follow up

You will see your surgeon at the following intervals after your operation to assess your progress (please note it may vary depending on your operation):

- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- 1 month
- 3 months

You should receive your 1st follow up appointment date on discharge from hospital.

Your GP will receive a copy of your discharge letter detailing what procedure you have had done via post.

Useful contact details:

The Jaw Surgeons

Sec: Mob. 07454 375580 email. info@thejawsurgeons.com

Mr Rhodri Williams

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Mr Kevin McMillan

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The Westbourne Centre

Tel. 0121 4560880

For more information:

Speak to people who have had jaw surgery e.g a family member, online bloggers

Websites:

British Orthodontic Society

<http://www.bos.org.uk/public-patients-home/orthodontics-for-adults/orthognathic-treatment-jaw-surgery>