



Queen Victoria Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Orthognathic Surgery Post-Operative Information

Maxillofacial and
Orthodontics Department



Oral hygiene



Maintaining a good standard of oral hygiene is extremely important to aid a fast recovery and prevent infection. Please follow these instructions carefully:

- **NO SMOKING.** Smoking significantly reduces blood supply in the mouth and slows down the healing process. Patients who smoke are at a much higher risk of infection and post-operative problems.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day to the best of your ability to maintain good oral hygiene at home. You may find this slightly uncomfortable but don't worry as you cannot do any harm. It is a good idea to buy a small headed or child's toothbrush before surgery to make tooth brushing easier for you.

- You will need to buy some Chlorhexidine Antiseptic Mouthwash (unless stated otherwise) and use as directed after every meal until your next appointment at the Maxillofacial/Orthodontic unit. You will be provided with a syringe to use with the mouthwash to help you get to those hard to reach areas.
- Use warm salty mouthwashes* 3-4 times a day during the first 1-2 weeks of recovery as this can aid healing.
- Keep lips moist with regular lip balm or petroleum jelly as your lips may feel dry or sore after surgery.

Stitches are dissolvable and can take two weeks or more to disappear. Leave them alone.

*To make warm salt mouthwash, fill a mug with warm water. This should be as warm as you can tolerate without burning yourself. Add one teaspoon of table salt and stir to dissolve. Gently rinse around your mouth, and then spit out. Finish the whole mug.

Diet

- It is important to ensure you maintain a soft diet for 6 weeks following your surgery
- You should drink plenty of fluids ; especially water, for the first few days. This is particularly important in hot weather.

- During the first week you will be able to manage a soft diet, e.g. soups, milkshakes, smoothies, ice cream or yoghurt, anything that is easy to swallow.
- From week two you can progress to food such as really soft pasta, shepherd's pie, or any food that does not require too much chewing.

Elastics

- You are likely to have small elastics between your upper and lower teeth following surgery. These are important to help with the new position of your teeth/jaws.
- If you have elastics, leave them alone for the first week.
- The elastics will be reviewed at your first follow-up appointment and you will be shown how to change them. Elastics are to be worn full time unless you are told otherwise.
- If an elastic breaks, replace it. If you can't replace it or you are concerned, please contact us.
- If you have an elastic at the front of your mouth you can remove this for eating and cleaning but please ensure it is replaced correctly as soon as possible afterwards.

- **You may have a plastic wafer (thin piece of plastic attached to your top teeth with elastics or wires). This should be left in place until your next follow up appointment. To clean your mouth, follow oral hygiene instructions, ignoring the wafer's presence.**

General information

- Following your surgery your mouth and jaw may be sore, swollen and slightly bruised, particularly during your first week of recovery. This will all improve with time.
- You will have stitches inside your mouth. These will dissolve on their own, a process that usually takes up to two weeks.
- You will experience numbness in your mouth and possibly your lips and/ chin. This usually improves with time. Avoid very hot drinks as you could scald yourself without realising.
- Excess saliva and drooling is common following this type of surgery. This will also improve with time.
- Cold ice packs or compresses can help minimise the swelling following surgery. You may also find them comforting during your first week of recovery. When you are in hospital you may be given a cooling mask to use.

- When you are discharged from hospital you will need to ensure you have pain relief to take at home. Follow the instructions given and take the drugs for as long as you need.
- Owing to the nature of the surgery, nose bleeds are a common side effect and will usually improve after the first week following surgery. If you are concerned please contact us.
- You should take three weeks off work or study to allow for recovery. If you require a fit note, we will happily provide one for you. Please ask the ward staff for this before you are discharged. Your GP will then be able to provide further fit notes if required.
- Take things easy for the first few days, with plenty of rest.
- General hygiene will make you feel better, e.g. showers/hair washing/tooth brushing.
- A positive mental attitude will aid a speedy recovery.
- Gentle exercise will help recovery, e.g. a walk in the fresh air. Avoid over-exerting yourself.
- Avoid alcohol.

- It is quite usual for us to see patients for a post-operative review on a weekly basis, especially in the first four weeks.
- Owing to the position of your jaws, your braces may rub the inside of your mouth and create ulcers. If this is the case, then apply the orthodontic wax to your brace to form a protective barrier. The ulcers will heal with the help of salt water mouth rinses.

Contact us

If you have any post-operative concerns or require reassurance, please contact our Mouth Care Lead on– 01342 414000 extension 6610, Monday to Friday, 9-5 or contact the Orthodontic Department on 01342 414419/414304

If you have a concern out of hours please contact us here at the hospital. Please telephone our switchboard any time on 01342 414000 and ask for the Maxillofacial Surgeon on call.

Should you have any questions or concerns about your brace, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Orthodontic Department

Tel: 01342 414419 or 414304

Monday-Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

Alternatively, in an emergency, please telephone **Switchboard on 01342 414000 and ask for the Maxillofacial Surgeon on call.**

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Max Facs

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