

This leaflet is a guide to the care you will receive. However, as your treatment is planned very carefully and individually, your medical team will explain the care that you personally will receive. Your stay will last approximately three to five days, depending on the extent of surgery and your general health. Please remember that this is just a guide and the care of each person will differ according to their needs.

Pre-operatively

The Facial Palsy Team consists of a specialist physiotherapist, a speech and language therapist, a psychological therapist, an oculoplastic surgeon, a maxillofacial surgeon and a plastic surgeon. The team will discuss your treatment with you at your outpatient appointment. Please ask if you do not understand any terms they use. You will also be given the opportunity to see your surgeon on the morning of surgery to ask any final questions. A series of assessments will be carried out before your operation. This will involve seeing the anaesthetist and having photographs taken in the Medical Photography Department.

What is the Labbé technique?

This operation was developed by Dr Daniel Labbé in France and is relatively new to the UK. It is also called the Lengthening Temporalis Myoplasty as the temporalis muscle (a fan-shaped muscle on the temple) is used. It aims to improve facial symmetry, both at rest and when smiling, by lengthening and transferring a muscle that usually moves the jawbone. There is usually no significant effect on your jaw function. The operation involves a scar over the top of your head which is usually hidden by your hair. There is also scar in line with the crease between the lower corner of the nose and the corner of the mouth.

Will it be painful?

There may be some pain initially after surgery. This is because a segment of the cheekbone is temporarily detached and replaced to access the temporalis muscle.

Any pain will usually be well controlled with painkillers. Different parts of the body heal at different rates and you may need painkillers on discharge until you feel comfortable.

Swelling

Your face will be bruised and swollen, particularly on the paralysed side and around the lip. Much of the swelling will have gone within two weeks after surgery, but there will still be a little swelling for up to six weeks.

Scars

Any surgery will result in a scar. However, these scars will certainly fade with time and vary in their visibility. The areas of your body which may receive scarring are:

- From the corner of the nostril of the nose to the corner of the mouth (nasolabial fold). This scar is to allow the muscle to be attached to the paralysed lip and helps to create the fold that otherwise tends to be poorly defined. This scar may seem more prominent in younger patients.
- Over the top of your scalp a zig-zag scar is created which is usually well hidden in your hair. Your hair is not shaved.
- A scar may need to be created on the lower lip to tighten it. This usually fades well, particularly in older patients.
- If your eyelid needs improvement then you may have a scar here. These generally heal very well.

What will happen after the operation?

Week 1

On the first morning after surgery you will probably stay in bed until reviewed by the team. Your head will be bandaged and there will be three plastic tubes (called drains) leading to a plastic bottle to collect any excess blood or tissue fluid from under the wounds. Once you are comfortable, you may gently walk around your bed and sit in your chair.

Over the next couple of days you will increase your activity and the drains will be removed as the amount of fluid coming out reduces. Once all of the drains have been removed, and you are able to perform daily tasks such as washing your hair, you will be able to return home. Chewing may feel a little uncomfortable for the first week or two, so a soft diet is recommended.

Week 2

Your scalp wounds will have been closed with surgical staples which cause less damage to hair follicles. These will be removed at your outpatient appointment approximately two weeks after surgery. At this point you may start to exercise gently and massage your face as directed by the team. By getting used to looking at yourself in the mirror and practising movements you will learn how to recognise desirable movements and avoid unwanted movements. You will be given advice about exercises to start at home.

Week 6 onwards

By this time much of the swelling should have gone and your face should be more symmetrical. Eventually, by clenching your teeth, you should be able to make the temporalis muscle contract and lift the corner of the mouth. Over time you learn how to contract the muscle and lift the corner of the mouth without clenching the teeth - a voluntary smile.

Over the next few weeks and months, as you continue your exercises in the mirror, you should be able to see movement on the operated side. The benefits of the surgery depend largely on how frequently you practise your exercises.

Please ask if you would like this leaflet in larger print or a different format.

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Facial reanimation by the
Labbé
technique (Lengthening
Temporalis
Myoplasty)

