

## LABBE 'Smile' REANIMATION PROCEDURE

### Pre-operative Patient Information Leaflet

#### Background

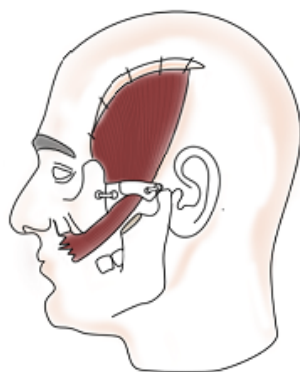
This surgery is for patients who have facial paralysis or weakness due to previous surgery, trauma or tumours and have lost the ability to smile. This surgery involves using one of your muscles used to chew food, called temporalis, and surgically attaching it to the corner of your mouth, so that you can learn to use it for smiling again.

#### Pre-operatively

Your suitability for this surgery will be discussed between you and our multidisciplinary team, which consists of specialist facial therapists, psychological therapists and plastic surgeons. We will work with you to ensure that you are physically and psychologically ready for the surgery, and the post-op rehabilitation. You will also be seen by the pre-operative nurses and the anaesthetists to ensure your fitness for surgery before a surgical date is arranged. Please feel free to ask questions at any stage of this process.

A series of assessments will be carried out before your operation including attending pre-assessment clinic and having photographs and/or videos taken in the medical photography department

#### What is the 'Labbe' procedure?



The 'Labbe', named after Dr. Daniel Labbe; a French plastic surgeon who developed this technique, is a reliable and effective method of achieving the return of a gentle, symmetrical closed mouth smile and to improve your resting facial symmetry. You achieve a closed mouth smile by biting your back teeth and activating the transferred 'chewing' muscle in order to smile.

Your operation will be performed under general anaesthesia. There will be two scar lines. One is hidden within your hairline and the other in the fold between your nose and your mouth.

#### The next day...

There will be two wound drains in place. These are usually removed within two days. There may be some pain initially after surgery, which will be well managed with pain relief. You will also have eye and cheek swelling. You will be able to shower over your scalp wound, which will have metal clips in it, two days later, after applying a generous amount of petroleum jelly such as Vaseline ointment (other brands are available).



During your surgery, you will have had a facemask supplied by your surgeon. This will be checked on the ward by the pressure garment team, who will show you how to take the mask on and off, and supply you with an additional mask, so that you can always wear a clean one. You will need to wear this mask for the first 2 weeks after your surgery. Your facial swelling will peak at around 3 to 4 days' after surgery and will be well controlled by sleeping with your head raised on pillows, wearing the face mask and you can also apply arnica ointment.

This facemask needs to be worn for the first two weeks after surgery to reduce swelling. You should keep it on day and night, except for bathing and eating (as required)

**Do not massage your face for 2 weeks.** Initially your cheek and jaw may feel tight and stiff, with some difficulty opening your mouth wide. This will settle over the next few weeks. Please refer to the exercises discussed later in this document.

## Post operatively

You may find that it is difficult to open your mouth in the normal way after surgery. This will improve as the swelling goes down. The important thing to remember after surgery is to avoid excessive chewing. This is because the new smile muscle that has been attached to the corner of your mouth is very fragile. The operation site needs time to heal before the muscle can be taught its new function of smiling. We therefore ask you to continue with a soft mash-able diet for two weeks after your surgery. **All food should be mashed with a fork before eating.**

You should remember to:

- Select soft moist options from the menu, which can be easily mashed.
- Mash all your food with a fork before eating.
- Avoid all hard and chewy food including bread, crusts, chewy meats, raw fruit, raw vegetables and raw salads, crunchy foods such as crisps and biscuits and sticky sweets or chewing gum.
- Take small mouthfuls.
- Add plenty of moisture to your food, for example, extra sauce. This will make it easier for you to mash and requires far less chewing.

Below is a list of suggested foods to choose both in hospital and once you are back at home. These are just some of the options available to you.

### SAVOURY

- Soft moist fish in sauce (without batter) or fish pie
- Tender well cooked meat such as stews, casseroles and some curries
- Tender well cooked vegetables and pulses (except those with husks or skins like sweet corn or peas)
- Cauliflower cheese
- Potato or pasta in sauce or gravy
- Egg dishes
- Soft well cooked vegetables, mushy peas or tinned chopped tomatoes
- Soup without lumps

## SWEET

- Smoothies
- Custard
- Yoghurts without solid pieces of fruit
- Fromage Frais
- Rice or milk puddings
- Milky drinks
- Ice cream
- Whips or mousse
- Stewed fruits or soft canned fruit
- Crème caramel
- Cheesecake without the base unless very moist

## Drinking

You will be encouraged to drink as much fluid as possible after your surgery. Below are some suggestions that may make drinking easier.

- A thin-lipped cup or glass, some people find a straw helpful
- Take small mouthfuls and avoid continuous drinking
- Support the bottom lip with your finger if required

## Jaw Exercises

You will be seen by a member of the facial therapy team before your surgery, who will show you how to do the following exercises. In order to prevent your jaw from tightening or stiffening up you will need to do some gentle jaw exercises. These can start straight after surgery. Please do these very gently.

- Very **slowly and gently** move your jaw from side to side three times before eating and before brushing your teeth.
- Very **small and gentle** mouth opening exercises. Do this three times before eating and before brushing your teeth.
- On return home - start gentle bite and smile exercises 2 or 3 times in front of the mirror before brushing your teeth and before meals. Do this in front of the mirror so that you make sure you do a small, gentle symmetrical smile on both sides of your face.

After 2 weeks you should be feeling more comfortable and the swelling should be going down. Unless told otherwise you can start to introduce some more chewy foods, as long as this is comfortable for you to eat.

## What will my rehabilitation include?

You will have an appointment with your facial therapist approximately 2-4 weeks after your surgery.

At this appointment you will be taught to;

- Stretch the new smile muscle gently
- Massage your scars and cheek
- Your jaw range of movement will be measured, and additional jaw exercises given as required
- You will work on your new smile (whilst gently biting teeth together) in front of the mirror
- Practice matching your new smile with the unaffected side of your face in the mirror

You will be expected to do your exercises regularly in order to get the best possible result from your surgery and will be reviewed every month in therapy until you are independent with your rehabilitation. Our goal is for you to be able to smile symmetrically without biting and without needing to use a mirror.

### Will I need any further surgery or treatment?

You will have to return for regular reviews with the surgeon and for removal of your stitches and surgical clips. You will be given these appointments before leaving hospital. It is possible that minor surgical revisions may be required following your surgery. These are usually done as day case procedures meaning you do not have to stay in hospital. For example, sometimes the cheek has to be loosened a little bit or the scar has to be revised. Some patients also go on to have Botulinum Toxin injections to the unaffected side of their face to stop unwanted or excessive movements.

**If you have any further questions please ask a member of the facial palsy team.  
01342 414004 0830-1500 Monday to Thursday**