



Queen Victoria Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Surgically Assisted Palatal Expansion (Fixed appliance)



What is SARPE?

This is a method of widening the upper jaw using a combination of orthodontics and surgery. This can often be the first stage in jaw surgery treatment. If you undergo this procedure you will start by having an orthodontic appliance fitted (see image overleaf) before the “widening operation.” The procedure will take place under general anaesthetic and is an operation to the upper jaw. You will be reviewed approximately five days after the surgery. At this appointment we will demonstrate how to adjust the brace in order to start widening the upper jaw. The orthodontist will advise you how many times you need to turn the screw per day; this can often be two or three times. We will organize frequent reviews over the following two to three weeks. When you have achieved the right amount of widening we will advise you to stop turning the screw.

Will there be any discomfort after the brace is fitted?

When the brace is first fitted, there may be a little discomfort. Your teeth may feel tender but this should soon ease as you get used to the brace.

Will there be any discomfort after the surgery?

The surgery is performed in hospital under a general anaesthetic and you will usually be kept in for one night after the operation. It is likely that you will need at least two weeks off work. After your operation, you may feel sore, swollen and may also notice some bruising. This will reduce over the first four to six days or so.

Cold ice packs or compresses can help reduce 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 face mask to use.

You will be reviewed about five days after your operation and then will usually start turning a special key. We often advise three turns in the morning, and three turns in the evening but will advise what is correct for you. During the time that you are turning the key we will check on a weekly basis how things are going.

If you find it uncomfortable when you turn the key you may find it helpful to take painkillers, one dose of paracetamol, ibuprofen or calpol, about 40 minutes before turning the key. If a sore spot starts to form on the inside of your lips or cheeks, cover the offending part of the brace with the soft wax that you have been given.

We would expect a gap to develop between the upper front teeth, do not be alarmed. This gap could be up to 1 cm wide.

You may also experience noises or cracking sounds as you turn the key and may feel additional pressure on the teeth whilst turning the key, which is normal.

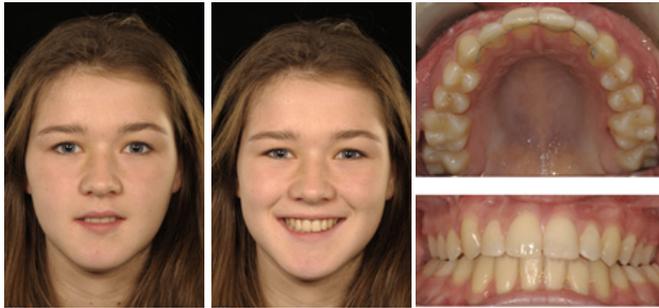
You may experience some nose bleeding after the operation, this is usually mild, and stops of its own accord. It's important not to blow your nose in a five-day period post operatively so that you allow any wound inside the nose time to heal fully.



Patient before any treatment



Patient at end of SARPE treatment. Patient has SARPE in



End of treatment, post SARPE and orthognathic treatment

Can I eat and drink as normal after surgery?

You will need to eat a slightly soft diet for the first two to three weeks. You must take care when eating that you don't damage your appliance. Think about what and how you chew!

Cleaning before and after the operation

It is essential that you keep your brace, teeth and gums perfectly clean, a single tufted toothbrush can help with this. You should clean your teeth after each meal and before going to bed at night. Carry a toothbrush with you to use after meals when you are away from home.

How do I clean my teeth?

Make sure you brush every surface of each tooth and the expander. We suggest you use a daily fluoride rinse. Further information will be given to you about the sort of mouthwash required.

What happens after the operation?

You will stay in hospital for one night. You will require regular appointments, weekly during the period when the key is being turned but this may vary according to your particular treatment. You should not have long gaps between appointments without the brace being checked.

Your initial appointment after the SARPE operation will be planned in advance as it is important when your operation date is set that you can attend all these appointments.

What happens after expansion is achieved?

Your orthodontist and surgeon will review you after expansion to confirm the next part of treatment. Some patients will need only orthodontic treatment. The majority of patients will need both orthodontics, and, later, jaw surgery.

What should I do if my appliance breaks?

It is important to check each day that your brace is not broken or damaged. If things don't look right or your brace becomes loosened, contact the Orthodontic Department urgently for a repair appointment.

Do I still have to see my own dentist during treatment?

Yes, it is your responsibility to visit your own dentist for regular check-ups throughout your orthodontic treatment

Routine Queries

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

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

Cancelling or changing appointments

– **01342 414141**

If you need to change an appointment, please let us or your registered Orthodontist know as soon as possible. If you need to change any one of your appointments. We will need to reschedule them all, as they need to be at certain intervals, so please ensure they are all convenient at the time of booking.

Orthodontic Emergencies / Additional queries

Please contact us as soon as possible if you become worried about your brace or have any other questions or concerns.

Maxillofacial and Orthodontics Unit (Main Outpatients)

Tel: 01342 414419 or 414304

Monday to Friday
8.30am – 4.30pm



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