

# Caring for your mouth after a COMET Stage 1 surgery

## Will I feel any discomfort afterwards

After any operation in the mouth, a certain amount of soreness and swelling is inevitable. Your wound is likely to be painful when the anaesthetic wears off.

You will probably experience some tenderness and swelling for a few days and this is likely to be accompanied by some bruising around the face and neck. This may take two to three days to develop and a week or more to subside.

## Should I expect any bleeding?

Before you leave the hospital, we ensure that your wound has stopped bleeding and formed a clot. **Please do not rinse your mouth out (or spit continuously) for the first 24 hours.** You should avoid hot drinks and strenuous exercise for the rest of the day following surgery. **Do not** poke the area with fingers or tongue.

Disturbing the clot in such ways may cause bleeding to start again. If this occurs, do not panic. Gently spit out the excess blood, place a folded gauze swab over the bleeding area, and apply firm pressure for 15 – 20 minutes whilst at rest. Repeat if necessary and seek advice from the hospital if the bleeding does not stop or you are worried.

## How will it feel?

The local anaesthetic injected into your soft tissue should wear off within a few hours. Do take care not to bite or chew your lips, cheek or tongue whilst still numb.

Stitches can sometimes be placed during surgery and usually dissolve within 1-3 weeks, unless you are informed otherwise.

It is common to have an unusual taste in the mouth and to have a little trace of blood in your saliva. It is quite safe to swallow saliva as normal.

## Eating and drinking

We recommend a diet of soft, smooth, cooled-down (or cold) food and drinks in the first 24 hours after your operation. If possible, try to eat and drink on the other side of your mouth, and avoid alcohol during this time.

## Cleaning teeth

Brush your teeth carefully during the first 24 hours, avoiding the wound site(s), and spit any toothpaste out gently, rather than rinsing. Normal brushing and oral hygiene methods may be resumed the day after surgery.

## Avoiding infection

Healing is usually straightforward, providing the area is left undisturbed and the mouth kept as clean as possible. It is important to **avoid smoking** until your wound has healed completely. Smoking significantly increases the risk of developing infection.

The day after your procedure, start using warm salty water (half a teaspoon of table salt dissolved in a small tumbler of warm water) to gently rinse over the wound 3-4 times a day, particularly after eating. Do not swallow this solution, gently spit it out. Continue for 4 – 5 days.

If chlorhexidine mouthwash is prescribed, use as directed to rinse the mouth out gently for 2 minutes, several times daily.

Some patients might be prescribed antibiotics after their operation. It is important to finish the whole course of this medication to prevent wound infection.

Please note: female patients should be aware that antibiotics can reduce the effectiveness of the contraceptive pill and should consider using alternative methods of contraception.

## Further questions

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

### Ward name, telephone number and extension:

#### Corneo-Plastic Unit (Eye clinic)

**Tel: 01342 414470/4166**

**For appointments**

**Between 08:30 – 17:00**

**For enquiries out of hours, weekends and bank holidays (including Christmas day):**

**Ross Tilley Ward**

**Tel: 01342 414451**

#### Eye Emergencies:

**Tel: 01342 306782**

**Between 09:00 – 17:00**

#### Switchboard:

**Tel: 01342 414000**



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Issue 1 – Ref. No: 0584

Approved by the Patient Information Review Group

Print: October 2025 - Review: September 2028

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