

Exercises to prevent pain and clicking of the jaw joint

The purpose of the exercise is to prevent clicking of the jaw, and to strengthen muscles which pull your jaw backwards. It will also overcome your tendency to move your jaw forwards or to one side as you open your mouth and, in time, will relieve any discomfort you may have.

Set aside two five minute periods every day at a time when you are relaxed and have nothing on your mind. One good time is just before you go to bed, another perhaps when you get home from work. Sit upright in a chair and carry out the following manoeuvres:

1. Close your mouth on you back teeth, resting the tip of your tongue on your palate just behind the upper front teeth.
2. Run the tip of your tongue backwards on the soft palate as far back as it will go, keeping the teeth in contact.
3. Whilst forcing the tongue back to maintain contact with the soft palate, slowly open your mouth until you feel your tongue being pulled away from the soft palate. Do not try to open your mouth further. Keep it in this open position for five seconds and then close your mouth for five seconds.
4. Repeat this manoeuvre slowly over the next five minutes in a firm but relaxed fashion.

As you open our mouth you should feel tension in the muscles at the back of your jaw and beneath your chin. For the first few times that you do the exercises you should check in front of a mirror that the lower teeth move vertically downwards - that is, there is not slight movement from side to side as you open your mouth. If the exercises are being carried out correctly there will be not clicks or noise from the joints. If there is, you must be making some error in carrying out your exercise. For the first week carry out this exercise only for the two periods suggested during the day. Thereafter do the exercises as often as you think about it.

If this exercise is carried out correctly and regularly, over a two-to-three-week period, you will retrain your muscles so that your jaw opens and closes smoothly without clicks or jerks and any pain that you are experiencing will subside.

Sources of information

Conquest Hospital:

Maxillofacial Unit Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 773207

Eastbourne District General Hospital

Maxillofacial and Orthodontic Unit - Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 771756

Out of hours:

In an emergency, go to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

NHS 111 - www.nhschoices

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4784 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
Mr C Surwald, Consultant, Mr M Shastri, Consultant

Next review date: June 2025
Responsible clinician: Lesley Davies
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