

## Orthodontics and Jaw Surgery

For patients considering having Orthodontic and Jaw Surgery treatment.

### What is the treatment for?

If the bones of the face and jaws are out of balance with each other, orthodontics alone will not be able to position the teeth to create a functioning bite. This imbalance between the jaws can result in a combination of problems. These may include:

- Difficulty eating due to teeth not meeting correctly.
- Poor facial appearance.
- Tooth damage/uneven wear.
- Crowded, irregular teeth.

Surgery will be required to one or both jaws to move them into the proper position so the teeth will meet correctly.

### What are the alternatives?

The options appropriate in your specific case will be explained to you by the consultants. There may be a compromise treatment involving straightening the teeth using only orthodontic braces, but this will not correct any imbalance between the jaws and is not suitable for everyone. Exploring the options does not commit you to any treatment and you can always choose to leave things as they are.

### What does treatment involve?

Treatment will usually take about two years and will involve;

- Orthodontic treatment for approximately eighteen months
- Operation - six weeks recovery time
- Further orthodontics for approximately six months

### Why do I need orthodontics as well as jaw surgery?

It is important that your teeth are moved into the right position so that after surgery, when you move the jaws, the teeth meet and function correctly.

### What does the operation involve?

Depending on the type of surgery you require the operation is carried out almost entirely through incisions within the mouth. Cuts are made through the bone via these incisions allowing the jaws to be moved to the correct position. The bones are then fixed in place by screws or small metal plates which are beneath the skin and generally remain in place forever. This means that patients having jaw surgery no longer have their jaws wired together. All stitches used in the mouth are dissolvable and will take about two weeks to disappear.

### Will I have an anaesthetic?

This operation is carried out under General Anaesthesia.

## How long will I be in hospital?

This varies, but most patients are usually in hospital for one or very occasionally two nights. As with any operation you will have to take it easy for the first week or two. Recovery time depends on the individual and the type of operation and you may need to take two to three weeks off from work/college.

## What are the potential risks and side effects?

You will have some swelling, bruising and discomfort after the operation. Pain is not usually as bad as you might expect and you will be sent home with adequate pain control medication. The swelling and bruising will begin to subside over the first two to three weeks but some residual puffiness may remain for a few months.

For operations on the lower jaw it is common to have some numbness of the lower lip, chin and (rarely) tongue on waking from surgery and for some weeks or months afterwards. In a very small number of cases, approximately 5-10%, a residual area of numbness may be permanent.

This does not effect movement or function of the lip, only the feeling in the lip, similar to an injection at the dentist. Following surgery, your jaw joints may feel stiff and this may take several months to improve.

## What are the expected benefits of treatment?

The main benefits are:

- Improved facial appearance.
- Improved function of teeth.
- Straight teeth.

## Will I need to have teeth extracted?

This depends on your individual problem. Your orthodontist may need you to have some teeth extracted in order to create enough space to straighten others. If so, all spaces will be closed as part of the treatment, you will not usually be left with any gaps.

If you are having surgery to the lower jaw and you have wisdom teeth present, these will often need to be removed approximately six months before the main operation.

## What type of brace will I need to wear?

Fixed (train-track) braces are used because they allow the most accurate positioning of the teeth prior to surgery.

## How long will the whole treatment take?

You will usually have about eighteen months of orthodontic treatment, with fixed appliances before the operation, and up to six months of wearing them afterwards.

There will then be a period of retention, wearing removable braces full-time for six months, then night-time only, to ensure a stable result.

You will need regular appointments, approximately every six weeks for the orthodontist to adjust your brace. Failed or cancelled appointments or repeated breakages of the brace will add to the overall treatment time.

## Are the braces removed for the operation?

No. The braces remain in position for the operation and for a few months afterwards. During the operation they help the surgeon to position the jaws correctly. After the operation the orthodontist uses them to fine-tune the bite to obtain a stable result.

## Will I look very different after the operation?

You will probably look different to some degree. How different usually depends on how much movement of the jaws is required. You should discuss this with your maxillofacial surgeon.

## Will I still need to see my regular dentist?

Yes. It is important that you still have regular check-ups, as your orthodontist will not be carrying out any other dental treatment you may need. A good standard of oral hygiene must be maintained during this course of treatment to maintain the health of the teeth and gums and reduce the risk of post-operative infection.

## What happens next?

If you are interested in finding out more about this treatment, study models, x-rays and photographs will be arranged and you will be given an appointment on the next available joint clinic with the orthodontic consultant and the maxillofacial surgeons. This will give you the opportunity to meet the entire team and ask any questions. They will want to know what you are concerned about and what you hope treatment will achieve. They will explain the options available to you.

If they decide this is the most appropriate treatment for you and you decide to proceed, appointments will be made to start your orthodontic treatment.

**If you have any further questions you wish to ask, please write them down and bring them with you to your joint clinic appointment. It is important you fully understand what is involved before you commit to having this treatment.**

## Other sources of information

### Dental Nurse

Conquest Hospital, Hastings - Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 773207  
Eastbourne District General Hospital - Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 771756

### Consultant secretary

Conquest Hospital, Hastings - Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 148907  
Eastbourne District General Hospital - Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 734819

## Important information

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. It is not definitive. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please be warned that it is always subject to change. Please, therefore, always check specific advice on the procedure or any concerns you may have with your doctor.

## 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.

## 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](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

## 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](mailto: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.

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## Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Mr N. Maini – Maxillofacial Consultant.

Mr M. Shastri – Maxillofacial Consultant.

Dr F. Pantanali – Orthodontic Consultant.

Dr A. Ahmad – Orthodontic Consultant.

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:

Outpatients

Next review date:	June 2025
Responsible clinician/author:	Lesley Davies Helen Hemsley

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