

Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Fracture of the upper jaw

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of your forthcoming treatment and contains answers to many of the common questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like further explanation please ask a member of the medical or nursing staff.

The problem

Your upper jaw has been broken. The number of fractures, where they have occurred and whether they need treatment to help them heal has already been established by the doctor who examined you. The treatment that is about to take place involves a general anaesthetic, which means you are going to be put to sleep completely.

What does the operation involve?

- Once you are asleep the fracture sites will be opened up.
- This involves making a cut on the inside of your mouth through the gum above your upper teeth.
- The broken bones are then put back together and held in place with small metal plates and screws.
- The gum is stitched back into place with dissolvable stitches that can take two weeks or even longer to fall out.
- During the same operation it is often necessary to place wires or metal braces around your teeth so that elastic bands can be attached to them and guide your bite into the correct position after surgery.
- Screws inserted into the jawbone above the teeth are occasionally used instead of these wires or metal braces.
- Any elastic bands are not usually attached until the day after your operation, which means that your jaws will be able to move freely when you wake up from surgery.

Will anything else be done while I am asleep?

Occasionally it is necessary to remove damaged or decayed teeth in and around the site of the fracture.

What can I expect after the operation?

- It is likely to be sore and regular painkillers will be arranged for you by the hospital doctor. The discomfort is usually worse for the first few days although it may take a couple of weeks to completely disappear.
- It is also necessary to make sure that the fractures heal without any infection and so you will also be given antibiotics through a vein in your arm whilst you are in hospital. You will be sent home with painkillers.

- You usually stay in hospital for one night following the surgery. The following day the position of your fractures may be checked with X-rays before you are allowed home.
- Although the plates and screws hold the fractures in place it still takes around six weeks for your jaw to heal completely. During this time you need to eat a relatively soft diet, the nature of which will be discussed with you by the doctors, nurses and dietitians.
- It is also important that you keep your mouth as clean as possible for the first few weeks after surgery to prevent infection. It may be difficult to clean your teeth around stitches because it is sore. It is best to keep the area free from food debris by gently rinsing your mouth with a mouthwash or warm salt water (dissolve a flat teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) commencing on the day after surgery.
- If any wires, metal braces or screws are used to help guide your bite into the correct position they will be removed in the outpatient department when your doctors are happy that your fracture has healed.
- Contact sports or activities should be avoided for six weeks.

Do I need to take any time off work?

Depending on the nature of your work it may be necessary to take two weeks or so off work and avoid strenuous exercise for this time. It is important to remember that you should not drive or operate machinery for 48 hours after your general anaesthetic.

What are the possible problems?

- Infection is uncommon because of the antibiotics that are used.
- Bleeding from the cuts inside your mouth is unlikely to be a problem but should the area bleed when you get home this can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the site for at least 10 minutes with a rolled up handkerchief or swab.
- Numbness – your top lip will be numb and tingly after the operation, similar to the sensation after having an injection at the dentist. The numbness may take several weeks to disappear.
- Occasionally teeth adjacent to the fracture site may be damaged by screws that are used.
- If it has been necessary to put any plates or screws in your jaw to hold it in position these are not normally removed unless they get infected because they tend not to cause problems. The metal that is used is titanium which does not set off metal detectors in airports etc.

Will I need further appointments?

A review appointment will be arranged before you leave hospital. It is usual to keep a close eye on you for several months following treatment to make sure that your jaw heals uneventfully.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Polish

Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem Informacji Pacjenta (Patient Information) pod numerem telefonu: 01223 216032 lub pod adresem patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Portuguese

Se precisar desta informação noutra língua, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio, por favor peça ao departamento que contacte a secção de Informação aos Doentes (Patient Information) pelo telefone 01223 216032 ou através do e-mail patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Arabic

إذا كنت تود الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، بالأحرف الكبيرة أو بشكل شريط صوتي، يمكنك أن تطلب من القسم الاتصال بمعلومات المريض على الرقم: 01223216032 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Cantonese

如您需以另一語言版本、特大字體或錄音形式索取本資料，請要求部門聯絡病人諮詢服務：電話 01223 216032，電郵地址 patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Turkish

Eğer bu bilgileri başka bir dilde veya büyük baskılı veya sesli olarak isterseniz, lütfen bulunduğunuz bölümdeki görevlilere söyleyin Hasta Bilgilendirme servisini arasinlar: 01223 216032 veya patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Urdu

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دیگر زبان میں، بڑے الفاظ میں یا آڈیو طریقہ سے درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی اس شعبہ سے پیشینٹ انفارمیشن سے ذیل کے ذریعہ رابطہ کرنے کی درخواست کریں: 01223 216032 یا patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য অন্য কোন ভাষায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও রেকর্ডিং পেতে চান তাহলে 'প্যাশেন্ট ইনফরমেশান' এর সঙ্গে 01223 216032 নম্বরে ফোন করে বা patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য ডিপার্টমেন্টটিতে অনুরোধ জানান।

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