

Having jaw surgery to correct your bite

Orthodontics and Restorative Dentistry
Maxillofacial department
Information for Patients

Last reviewed: March 2025
Next review: March 2028
Leaflet number: 1098 Version: 2

What is corrective jaw surgery?

We use corrective jaw treatment to change the position of the jaw. We do this when braces cannot correct the way your top and bottom teeth meet (bite). We do this by moving the jaws from their original place and fixing them to the new position. The treatment takes 2 to 3 years.

What to expect?

Before surgery

The jaw surgeon and the orthodontist will see you. They will go through the treatment options and make a personalised plan for you. They will take:

- x-rays
- dental molds
- photographs

We will repeat these at different stages during and after treatment.

You may need to have your lower wisdom teeth taken out. We will do this at least 6 months before the jaw surgery.

Braces (orthodontics)

The first stage of treatment will be orthodontic treatment at Glenfield Hospital. This is to reposition your teeth. You will have train track braces. The braces will need adjustment around every 8 weeks. If your braces break contact the Orthodontic Department immediately.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Jaw surgery

You will be ready for your jaw surgery when you are more than half way through your brace treatment. We will move your jaws to their new position.

After surgery

Your braces are likely to stay on for 6 to 9 months. We will give you removable retainers after your braces are removed. You will have to wear these retainers for life, these will help keep your teeth in the new position.

We will review you up to 5 years after your operation.

What happens in jaw surgery?

We do surgery to your upper jaw (maxilla) or lower jaw (mandible). We can also do surgery to both depending on your treatment plan.

We put the jaws in their new position. We hold it in place with small screws and plates which normally stay in for life.

We do the surgery from inside the mouth. This avoids any scars on your face.

You will have surgery at the Leicester Royal Infirmary. It normally lasts between 2 to 6 hours. This depends on if it is single or double jaw surgery.

Risks of upper jaw surgery

Very common (most patients experience this):

- Numbness in the cheeks, upper lip, gums and palate. This may be permanent or temporary.
- Difficulty opening the mouth wide
- Nose bleeding requiring nasal packs (bandages)
- Changes in the shape of the nose. It may broaden the nasal base or tip the nose upwards.

Common (less than 1 in 20 patients having surgery):

- Upper jaw can move back to start position (particularly if upper jaw moved down)
- Infection of maxillary plates requiring reoperation to remove the plates and screws
- Friction burns or bruising from surgical drill
- Soft tissue injury from prolonged traction
- Deviated nasal septum affecting breathing
- Short term or long term sinus infection
- Communication between sinus and mouth (Oro-antral fistula)

Uncommon (significantly less than 1 patient in 100):

- Doing operation again to correct upper jaw position
- Heavy bleeding that needs blood transfusion and/or further intervention
- Jaws wired together (intermaxillary fixation)
- Bad swelling causing dangerous airway obstruction.
- Tooth damage or loss
- Bones not healing or having dead bone tissues (necrosis). You will need surgery to fix this.
- Stabbing, burning, or tingling pain leading to life long medication

Risks of lower jaw surgery

Very common (most patients experience this to some extent):

- Numbness to the lower lip, lower gums and chin. This may be permanent in up to 40% of patients to different degrees.
- Difficulty opening mouth wide.

Common (less than 1 in 20 patients having surgery):

- Lower jaw can move back to start position. This happens when mandibular movement is large or an open bite is being closed.
- Infection of mandibular plates. You will need another operation to remove the plates and screws.
- Friction burns or bruising from surgical drill
- Worsening of breathing even in sleep (sleep apnoea). This is in the case of setback procedures where the lower jaw is being moved backwards.

Uncommon (significantly less than 1 patient in 100):

- Doing operation again to correct mandibular position
- Heavy bleeding that needs blood transfusion and/or further intervention
- Jaws wired together (intermaxillary fixation)
- Bad swelling causing dangerous airway obstruction.
- Popping, clicking, reduced range of motion, and pain in jaw (temporomandibular joint).
- A part of the jaw joint dissolving away needing surgery to correct this (condylar resorption).
- Tooth damage or loss
- Bones not healing or having dead bone tissues (necrosis).

Care after the surgery and recovery time

You would need to stay in hospital for 1 or 2 nights. You will need to take 4 to 6 weeks off work, college or university.

Your face will be swollen, numb and sore. You will not be able to open your mouth very much for the first 2 weeks. You will have elastics in your mouth attached to the braces to keep your bite.

Hilotherm

Whilst in hospital you will be able to use a Hilotherm machine (HTP 1). This is free of charge. It helps reduce swelling.

We recommend you carry on using the Hilotherm machine for 1 to 2 weeks after your jaw surgery.

You can also hire the Hilotherm (HTP 1) machine from Hilotherm Ltd. This will cost you money. Scan the QR code below or go to their website for more information.

Hilotherm Ltd.

Bookings must be made online.

www.hilotherm.co.uk



We will send you home with painkillers and antiseptic mouthwash to use during healing.

Your orthodontist will review you a few days after surgery.

The healing process will take around 6 weeks.

You will need to have a soft diet for at least 6 weeks. You will need to eat soft foods like mashed potatoes and pureed food. You will drink using a straw.

Tooth brushing is very important throughout treatment, but especially after surgery. We advise you to use a soft tooth brush for the first few weeks after surgery.

What are the benefits jaw surgery?

This depends on the reason for having this treatment. It could improve your facial profile. It could also improve your bite. It could allow you to eat and chew certain foods, especially if you have an open bite.

Where can I find more information?

British orthodontic society

<https://bos.org.uk/patients/treatments/your-jaw-surgery/>

The website is useful and accurate. It has more information like videos and interviews.



Contact details

Department of Orthodontics and Restorative Dentistry

Glenfield Hospital, Groby Road, LE3 9QP

From 8am to 5pm

Call: 0116 250 2648

Department of Maxillofacial Surgery

Leicester Royal infirmary, LE1 5WW

Balmoral building, level 0

From 9am to 5pm

Call 0116 2585279

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

Previous reference:

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk