

**Patient
Information**

Discharge information following a Glossectomy and Radial Free Forearm Flap

Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about what to expect following your glossectomy and radial free forearm flap.

Follow up appointments

- You will return to Maxillofacial Outpatient Department 1 week after discharge from the ward to attend a Dressings Clinic.
- The consultant will see you in an outpatient clinic 2 weeks after your discharge to review your recovery progress.
- The Head and Neck speech and language therapists and dietitians will advise you on the consistency of food you can safely manage before you are discharged from hospital. They will do regular joint outpatient reviews to help build up your diet.

What to expect following discharge

- The flap may feel big and bulky following the surgery but this will shrink over time as it heals and recovers.
- The flap will not have nerves running through it. This means you will have a loss of sensation on that part of your tongue, making it difficult to eat, drink and speak. Our Head and Neck speech and language therapists will review this while you are on the ward.
- You may have some stiffness in your thumb on the side where the tissue has been removed. Exercising the thumb to get it moving should help.
- Expect to feel very tired following your surgery as your body will use a lot of energy to recover and heal.
- As long as you are careful, you can still brush your teeth. A soft toothbrush is usually best at first.

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Department

**Head and Neck
Oncology**

Review due

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- The flap may start growing hair in your mouth where it would usually grow on your forearm. This can be removed with laser treatment in the future when the consultant is happy with the healing process.

What to do if you have a problem at home

- **Pain** – If you are experiencing pain that is not being controlled with the pain relief you have been sent home with then please contact your GP for advice. The Head and Neck Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) can also advise you further.
- **Swelling** – This is to be expected following a glossectomy and radial free forearm flap operation and will slowly reduce over time. However, if the swelling worsens please contact the Head and Neck CNS for advice.
If the swelling starts to affect your ability to breathe, please call 999 and ask for an ambulance.
- **Bleeding** – Slight bleeding may occur when eating but should settle. If you are concerned please contact the Head and Neck CNS. However, if the bleeding continues or you are bleeding large volumes, please go to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department or call 999 for an ambulance.
- **Infection** – If you have any signs of infection such as a raised temperature, redness, new pain or a discoloured discharge then contact the Dressings Clinic for advice. If out of normal working hours contact the nursing safe on Ward 2b.

Contact information

Clinical Nurse Specialists

Tel: 0300 422 6785

Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm

Head and Neck Dietitian

Tel: 0300 422 3460

Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm

Head and Neck Speech and Language Therapists

Tel: 0300 422 8105

Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm

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Out of Hours

Ward 2b

Tel: 0300 422 6184

Dressing Clinic

Tel: 0300 422 3194 and ask for the dressing clinic

Monday to Thursday, 9:00am to 4:00pm

Friday, 9:00am to 1:00pm

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