

**Patient  
Information**

# Information for patients who have had surgery in the mouth

## Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about how to look after your mouth following surgery. Following this advice should allow healing to complete quickly.

## What to do after your treatment

- Take things quietly for the rest of the day. Avoid exertion.
- Avoid alcohol and smoking for at least 24 hours and ideally until healing is complete.
- To avoid burning yourself you should avoid hot drinks and hot food until normal sensation has returned to your mouth and lips.
- Do not apply any heat to the side of your face
- Avoid rinsing your mouth out for 24 hours after the operation. After this time, gently use warm salt water mouthwashes 4 times a day after meals. (Dissolve half a teaspoon of salt in a tumbler of water)
- You may have been given a mouthwash, if so, please follow the instructions on the label.
- If you have been given a course of antibiotics you should take these as directed by your surgeon. Please make sure that you complete the course.
- A clean mouth is essential to help healing. Follow the above instructions and try to brush your teeth as normal, being very gentle near the operation site.
- If you have had intravenous sedation or a general anaesthetic you should not drive, operate machinery or sign any legal documents for at least 24 hours and ideally for 48 hours.

Reference No.

**GHPI0208\_02\_22**

Department

**Oral &  
Maxillofacial**

Review due

**February 2025**

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## What to expect after treatment

### Discomfort

This may last for several days after your operation, but is usually well controlled by simple pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, taken regularly. Always read the label, especially if you take other medicines or if you have been given prescription pain relief.

### Swelling and bruising

This is usually at its worst 1 to 2 days after the surgery and can last up to 2 weeks.

### Jaw stiffness, clicking or limitation of mouth opening

This may last several days. A soft diet and rest will speed the healing process.

### Numbness or altered sensation

Even if you have had a general anaesthetic (asleep) for your operation, local anaesthetic will have been injected to numb the area and reduce the discomfort immediately after the procedure.

This means that you will have a numb or tingling sensation around some areas of your face and mouth. This may last for several hours.

Some operations to the mouth and jaws carry the risk of loss or altered sensation to the lower lip and/or tongue. This is due to the closeness of nerves to the operation site. The risks will be discussed with you before the operation if they apply.

### Bleeding

Those having operations inside the mouth may expect a little bleeding which in most cases is easily controlled by firm pressure. This can be done by placing a clean damp cloth, such as a handkerchief, over the site and biting firmly for 20 minutes.

### Stitches

These are usually dissolvable but may take up to 3 weeks to disappear. If non-dissolving stitches are used during your procedure an appointment will be made for you to have them removed. We will confirm whether this is at our clinic, your GP's surgery or dentist's surgery, before discharge.

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## What if you do have problems?

Most people have very few problems and following the advice in this leaflet is usually all that is needed. Therefore we do not always review patients following surgery.

However, if you do have a problem or you need further advice, please contact the Oral and Maxillofacial Outpatient Department.

## Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the oral and maxillofacial surgery department.

### Outpatient department

New and follow-up clinic booking enquiries

Tel: 0300 422 6940

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm

Minor surgery (local anaesthetic with/without sedation) booking enquiries

Tel: 0300 422 3197

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm

### Inpatient and Day Surgery Unit booking enquiries

Tel: 0300 422 8192

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm

## Post-operative concerns

Please contact the Gloucestershire Hospitals switchboard on Tel: 0300 422 2222 and ask for the 'operator' when prompted. When the operator responds, please ask to be put through to the 'on-call senior house officer for Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery'.

## Website

For further information, please visit the Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery webpage: [www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/oral-maxillofacial-surgery/](http://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/oral-maxillofacial-surgery/)

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## **Feedback**

We would welcome your feedback regarding your treatment. Please visit the comments section at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

Feedback can also be left on the Gloucestershire Hospitals twitter account: @gloshospitals

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