

**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.

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**GHPI0208\_09\_23**

Department

**Oral and  
Maxillofacial**

Review due

**September 2026**

**Patient  
Information**

## 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.

**Patient  
Information**

## Who to contact if you have concerns after the surgery

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 have a problem, please contact the **Oral and Maxillofacial Outpatient Department** via the hospital switchboard between 8:00am and 8:00pm.

### Gloucestershire Hospitals Switchboard

Tel: 0300 422 2222

When prompted, ask for the Operator, then ask to be put through to the 'On call Senior House Officer' for the Oral and Maxillofacial Department.

Alternatively, you can contact your registered dentist for advice.

In an emergency, please go to the nearest Emergency Department.

## Other useful contact information

### 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 8191

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

## 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/)

## Patient Information

### Feedback

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

Scroll to the bottom of the page and select the 'Contact us' link. On the next page, select 'Give feedback or make a complaint' then select the link below the heading 'Give feedback about an NHS service.'

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

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## Making a choice

### Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



#### Ask 3 Questions

**To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.**

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

\* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>