

# Osteotomy

## Maxillofacial Department



Patient information leaflet

## **What is an osteotomy?**

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It is a surgical operation to change the position of the bones at the top or bottom of the jaw. They can be moved in any required direction so that they give the correct position to provide a functioning bite. You will have a better facial appearance, your teeth will be straighter and it will feel comfortable when you are eating, talking and when your mouth is closed.

## **Do I still need Orthodontics?**

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Yes. This operation is only done in agreement with your orthodontist because your teeth will need to be moved into a different position as well.

Orthodontic treatment starts first and jaw surgery is usually carried out when you have stopped growing in your late teens.

After osteotomy you will still need to have more orthodontic work.

The whole process can take up to 2-3 years.

## **Do I have to have an Osteotomy?**

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No. You make the decision after it has been discussed with you and your family and you have had all the options explained.

## **How do you decide that I need an Osteotomy?**

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Each person is different so you will need a proper assessment so the surgeon can work out the best treatment plan for you.

You will need some investigations first:

1. Clinical examination.
2. Xrays of the face, jaw and teeth.
3. Photographs
4. Impressions of your teeth to construct plaster models,
5. Occasionally special scans.

The orthodontist and surgeon work together and agree exactly what you will need to have done. Everything is worked out very precisely and with careful planning. You will have several appointments in clinic to work out the fine details. You may need to have some teeth removed before the osteotomy. This includes wisdom teeth which may get in the way when the jaw division is done.

## Will I need braces?

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Yes. Your orthodontist will put on fixed braces (sometimes called train tracks) and start moving the position of your teeth before the operation.

They will stay on during the operation.

After the operation the orthodontist will continue the treatment to get your teeth into the correct final position.

## How is the operation done?

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It is done under general anaesthetic so you will be asleep. The work is carried out inside your mouth. One or both jaw bones will be carefully divided, moved into the new position, and then fixed using tiny metal screws and/or metal plates. There may be a small keyhole access wound on each side of your lower face to aid positioning of the screws. These will heal over very quickly. Screws and plates do not usually need removing afterwards.

There will be some dissolvable stitches in the mouth which come out by themselves.

You will usually come into hospital the day before operation or the morning of your operation and go home the day after.

## Is my jaw wired together afterwards?

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No. This is not usually necessary. However, your teeth may need to be guided together and held in the new position using some small elastic bands stretched between the upper and lower braces. These may stay in position for a few weeks.

You will be shown by your doctor or orthodontist how to position these bands if they break and if you need to remove them to eat and clean your teeth properly. They must remain in position for the majority of the time though.

## What should I expect after the operation?

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**Pain:** There is always some pain and discomfort after jaw surgery but you will be given analgesia (pain killing medication) as needed after the operation and advised about medication when you go home.

**Swelling:** Your face will be swollen and may be bruised and you will not be able to open your mouth very far at first. Swelling is at its worst for the first week but will then settle quickly over the coming weeks. Some swelling may remain for several weeks before it all disappears.

**Numbness:** There may be some numbness of the lips, tongue or face. This usually settles within the first few weeks but can sometimes take several months to wear off. Some is very occasionally permanent.

**Antibiotics:** These may be necessary to reduce the risk of infection. They are given through a "drip" intravenously for the first 24 hours and then in tablet/liquid form for a further week.

**Eating:** You may need to take a liquid diet for the first few days but then progress to a soft diet as soon as able. After 6 weeks you should be able to eat a normal diet again. More advice on your diet will be given after your operation.

**Work/studying:** You will need around 2 to 4 weeks off depending on whether the operation involves one or both jaws.

**Exercise:** No strenuous exercise or contact sports for at least 6 weeks. Gentle exercise eg walking is good for you.

## **What are the main risks associated with this operation?**

Swelling for about two weeks. Bruising – variable degrees. Numbness or altered sensation of the lower lip. This is usually temporary but can last for weeks or months. Infection and bleeding. Incorrect bite. This is unusual but some adjustment may be required.

## **What should I do next?**

The Maxillofacial admissions staff will contact you and agree a date for your operation. The letter will tell you when to arrive and where to go.

Your surgeon will usually see you again in clinic about 2 weeks before the operation to finalise the treatment plan and answer any questions you may still have.

When you come into hospital it is useful to bring a box of tissues, some lip salve and a soft baby toothbrush to enable you to clean your teeth after the operation.

After the operation you will be given another information leaflet with advice on what to do and how to care for your mouth and teeth.

In the meantime if you have any problems or any more questions please contact the Maxillofacial department on the telephone number on the back of this leaflet.

## **Reference source**

- [www.BAOMS.org.uk](http://www.BAOMS.org.uk)
- [www.yourjawsurgery.co.uk](http://www.yourjawsurgery.co.uk)





## Contact details

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For further information or advice please contact us.

### Maxillofacial Outpatients

**Telephone:** 01483 406775 (Monday–Friday, 9am–4.30pm)

Outside these hours or in case of an emergency call **01483 571122** and ask for the on-call Maxillofacial doctor.

### Operation queries/changes

If you need to cancel your operation or for queries regarding your date of operation contact the **Admissions Office** direct on **01483 402734**.

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### PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Author: Joy Sampson

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