

Contact Details

Oral and Maxillofacial Department

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Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm

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**Use the space below to write in the
name and contact details of your Consultant**

Name

Tele:

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Patient Information Leaflet

Mandible/Lower Jaw Fracture



Please speak to a member of staff if you need this
leaflet in large print, braille, audio
or another language

Introduction

This leaflet provides you with information on what to expect during your treatment and will help you to understand what is involved. If after reading the leaflet you have any questions, please speak to one of the nursing staff.

What is a mandible lower jaw fracture?

Your lower jaw has been broken and the number of fractures that have occurred that require treatment to help them heal has been established by the doctor who examined you.

During the operation

- The treatment involves an anaesthetic which will put you to sleep completely. Once you are asleep, the fracture site will be opened up.
- A cut will be made on the inside of your mouth through the gum.
- In very difficult fractures, it is sometimes necessary to make a cut on the outside of the mouth through the skin. This will be discussed with you prior to signing the consent form.
- The broken bones are then put back together and held in place with small metal plates and screws.

NOTES

- Occasionally teeth adjacent to the fracture site may be damaged and require removal at the time of surgery or later.
- Infection is rare however if this happens the plate and screws in your jaw will need to be removed.

Follow up

A review appointment will be arranged before you leave hospital. This is so that you can be monitored over a period of several months to make sure your jaw heals correctly.

- Sometimes screws are inserted into the jawbone above the teeth instead of wires or braces.
- Occasionally, it is necessary to remove damaged or decayed teeth at the site of the fracture.
- The gum is stitched back into place with dissolvable stitches. These can take up to 6 weeks to dissolve.
- Your jaw will be able to move freely when you wake up from surgery.
- Antibiotics will be given to you through a vein in your arm whilst you are in hospital so that your fractures can heal without any infection.

After the operation

- The position of the fractures will be checked with x-rays before you are allowed home.
- It is sometimes necessary to place wires or metal braces around your teeth so that elastic bands can be attached to them. This helps guide your bite into the correct position following your surgery.
- The wires or metal braces will be removed in the outpatient clinic once the doctor is happy the fracture has healed.

- You may feel sore and regular painkillers will be given to you to control the pain.
- The plates and screws hold the fractures in place, however, it will take around 6 weeks for your lower jaw to heal completely.
- Any discomfort you feel should only last for a few days, however it may take a few weeks to completely disappear.

Recovery period

During the 6 week recovery period:

- Only eat a soft diet. This will be discussed with you by the dietitian.
- **Starting the day after surgery**, gently rinse your mouth with a mouthwash or warm salt water. (1 teaspoon of salt dissolved in a cup of warm water).
- Continue to keep your mouth clean for the first few weeks to prevent infection as it will be difficult to clean your teeth due to the soreness around the stitches.

Travel and work

- Depending on the nature of your work it may be necessary to take 2 weeks off work.

- Do not drive or operate machinery for 48 hours after your general anaesthetic.
- Avoid strenuous exercise during the first 2 weeks.
- The metal that is used is titanium which does not set off metal detectors in airports etc.

Risks and side effects

- Bleeding from the cuts inside your mouth is unlikely however should the area bleed when you get home this can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the site for at least 10 minutes with a rolled up handkerchief or swab.
- The nerve that runs through the centre of the lower jaw that supplies feeling to your lower lip, chin and bottom teeth, may have been bruised at the time of the fracture.
- If you felt some tingling before the operation in your lip and or chin, it may become worse as a result of the surgery.
- The numbness should get better on its own over several months. Occasionally the numbness is permanent.