

Contact Details

Oral and Maxillofacial Department

County Hospital

Nurse's Office Tel: 01785 230577

Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm

Royal Stoke Hospital

Nurse Base Tel: 01782 674801

Medical Secretary Tel: Switchboard 01782 715444

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

Name

Tele:

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Patient Information Leaflet

Zygoma (cheekbone Fractures)



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 fractured zygoma?

This is when it is broken due to an injury.

Cheekbone forms part of the eye socket and protects the eyeball and supports it from below.

It is linked to the side of the nose and upper jaw.

Your doctor will decide on the appropriate treatment depending on the number of fractures, where it occurred and how badly it is broken.

Preparing for surgery

You will be discharged the next day after your operation.

You will have X-rays before you are allowed to go home to check the position of your cheekbone.

What does surgery involve?

You will be anaesthetised (put to sleep) and the cheekbone will be put to the right place.

A small cut, about 1 inch long will be made through the hair in the temple.

Blindness. Bleeding in and around the eye socket can very rarely cause a problem with the eyesight immediately following surgery.

You will be closely monitored in the first few hours after your operation to check it this happens so it can be dealt with quickly.

If you experience worsening vision or pain in and around your eye when you get home you should return to hospital immediately.

Lower eyelid malposition. If a cut is made in the skin of the lower eyelid, the outside corner of the lid may occasionally be pulled down slightly (called ectropion). This tends to settle on its own but may need further surgery.

Plate removal. If it has been necessary to put any plates or screws in your cheekbone to hold it in position, these are not usually removed. This is because they do not cause problems unless they become infected.

The metal that is used is titanium and does not set off metal detectors in airports etc.

Possible risks/side effects

Post –op numbness. There is a nerve that runs through the cheekbone that supplies feeling to the cheek, side of your nose and upper lip. This nerve may have been bruised at the time of the fracture and as a result you might already feel some tingling or numbness over your face.

The tingling may also be caused or made worse by surgery. In the majority of people the numbness gets better on its own although it may take several months to do so. In very few cases, the sensation never fully recovers.

Scarring. Any cuts made on the face will produce a scar. These should fade with time and after a few months are usually difficult to see.

Post op bleeding. Bleeding from the incisions is unlikely to be a problem 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.

Post op bruising & swelling. There will be some swelling and bruising at the operation site after surgery which will settle with time. You may also develop a black eye.

Small metal plates and screws are sometimes used to hold your cheekbone in position. If this is necessary during surgery, there may be 1 or more cuts required which include:

- A cut made close to the outside end of the eyebrow.
- A cut made on the inside of the mouth through the gum above the back teeth.
- A cut made in the skin crease just below the lower eyelashes or the inside of the lower eyelid. This can be because of the fracture in the cheekbone producing a break in the floor of the eye socket.

Any cuts made are put back together at the end of the operation with stitches.

Stitches on the skin need to be removed after a week however stitches inside the mouth will be dissolvable and can take up to 6 weeks or longer to fall out.

If the bones in the floor of the eye socket are shattered and do not support the eyeball properly, it may be necessary to 'graft' the floor of eye socket to support the eyeball. As the materials used in this process include thin sheets of titanium, plastic or bone grafted from other areas of your body, consent and your options will be discussed with you prior to any procedure.

After surgery

- You will feel sore and regular painkillers will be arranged for you.
- The discomfort is at its worst during the first few days following surgery and may take a couple of weeks to completely disappear.
- Cheekbone fractures should heal without any infection however sometimes antibiotics are necessary particularly if a 'graft' has been used. Antibiotics are given through a vein in your arm whilst in hospital and a course of antibiotics may be given to you to take home along with some painkillers.
- In the first 24 hours after surgery you may see some bruising and swelling in the skin around the eyelids. Occasionally, the whites of the eyes may become bruised giving them a red appearance. These will reduce within 2 weeks. A cold compress can help as well as sleeping propped upright for the first few days.
- It can take up to 6 weeks for your cheekbone to heal completely. Take great care to avoid any injury to this side of your face as it can push the cheekbone back out of position.

Aftercare

- **Do not blow your nose on the side of the fracture for a period of 1 month** as it can cause swelling around the eye.
- Please make sure that stitches or dressings are kept dry until they are removed.
- If you have any incisions inside your mouth, cleaning your teeth may be difficult. To help with this, please rinse your mouth with a mouthwash or warm salt water (dissolve a flat teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) the day after surgery. This will help keep your mouth area free from food debris.

Time off work

- Please take 2 weeks off work to aid recovery.
- Do not do any strenuous exercise for 2 weeks.
- Do not operate machinery for at least 48 hours following surgery.

Driving

Do not drive for 48 hours following surgery.

Follow up

An appointment will be made for you at the hospital to remove the stitches. A review appointment may also be provided so that the healing of your fracture can be monitored.