

Cheekbone (isolated zygomatic arch) fracture surgery



Information for patients

You have been treated in the Emergency Department for a broken (fractured) cheekbone. This leaflet explains the surgery we may offer you to fix the break. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the doctors or nurses caring for you.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name** and **date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.

Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

Why do I need treatment?

You have broken the arch of your cheekbone. Your cheekbone is part of your eye socket. It protects your eyeball and supports it from below. It is also linked to the side of your nose and your upper jaw.

How will the break be treated?

We will give you an appointment to see a consultant in the Oral and Maxillofacial outpatient clinic in King's Dental Institute. This appointment is usually five – seven days after you injured yourself. They will decide if you need an operation to mend the break and agree a date with you for surgery. You will have it about two weeks after injury, to give the swelling in your face time to go down. You will have a general anaesthetic for your surgery so you will be completely asleep.

What are the benefits of surgery?

- It relieves pain.
- You heal better and faster.
- It improves the shape of your cheekbone.

What are the risks?

Common risks:

- Scarring. Any cuts made on your skin will leave scars. But these should fade and be difficult to see after a few months. They are also likely to be hidden by your hair.

Rare, short-term risks:

- Bleeding from the cuts on your skin. This is not usually a problem, but if it happens you should be able to stop it by pressing against the wound with a rolled-up handkerchief or a swab for at least 10 minutes.



Serious but rare risks:

- Infection. This is rare because we give you antibiotics. You also have a good blood supply to your face which makes infections less likely.

What are the risks of having a general anaesthetic?

Straight after a general anaesthetic you may feel tired, dizzy or weak. You must have someone to collect you and stay with you for the first 24 hours. During the first 24 hours you should not:

- drive or operate any motorised vehicle or electrical equipment
- sign any legal documents or make important decisions
- drink alcohol.

You may feel weak or dizzy at times during the first 7 – 10 days. If this happens, sit down until the feeling passes. You may also have the 'post-operative blues' and feel a little depressed, though this should soon pass.

What are the alternatives?

If the fracture has not been dislocated or is only slightly dislocated, you may not need surgery. You will come into the outpatient clinic for check-ups and we ask that you contact us if your symptoms get worse.

If we suggest that you have this treatment, there is no alternative.

Consent

We must by law obtain your written consent to any operation and some other procedures beforehand. Staff will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives before they ask you to sign a consent form. If you are unsure of any aspect of the treatment proposed, please do not hesitate to speak with a senior member of the staff again.



What happens before surgery?

Pre-assessment clinic: We will ask you to come to the pre-assessment clinic for some screening tests. These include MRSA screening, taking a blood sample, and checking your blood pressure, height and weight.

When to come in for surgery: The admissions officer or ward nurse will ask you to come to a named ward at a set time, usually at 6.30am on the morning of your operation. Please arrive on time. If you do not arrive at the ward on time, we may cancel your operation. Beds are allocated on the afternoon before your surgery. If there is no available bed your surgery will be cancelled but rescheduled as soon as possible.

What happens during surgery?

We will give you a general anaesthetic. Once you are asleep we put your cheekbone back in the right place. This usually involves the surgeon making a small cut about 2.5cm (1in) long through the hair in your temple. They then 'lift' out the arch to realign it. The cuts are closed with stitches at the end of the operation.

What happens after surgery?

The nurses may check your eyes and sight frequently after your operation. Before you go home you may also have an x-ray to check the position of the repaired arch of your cheekbone.

Your cheek is likely to be sore so we will give you painkillers to ease the pain. The discomfort is usually worst for the first few days and it may take a couple of weeks to go away completely.

Although cheekbone breaks usually heal without infection, in rare cases we may need to give you antibiotics. Your surgeon will discuss



this with you and may give you a course of antibiotics – as well as painkillers – to take at home.

You may have some swelling and bruising on the skin around your temple. You will notice this most in the first 72 hours after surgery and it will go down a lot by the end of the second week. You can help to reduce the swelling and bruising by using a cold compress, such as an ice pack wrapped in a cloth or a towel and sleeping propped upright for the first few nights after surgery.

It will take about six weeks for your cheekbone to heal fully. During this time, you must be careful not to injure this side of your face because it may push the arch out of place again.

It is important to keep any stitches or dressings dry until they are removed.

How long will I be in hospital?

You may need to stay in hospital for one night after surgery or you may be able to go home the same day. We will tell you how long you will need to stay in at your pre-assessment appointment.

What can I eat and drink?

You may find it more comfortable to eat a soft diet for the first few days after surgery as chewing hard foods may feel a bit sore.

It is also important that you do not smoke because it makes you more likely to develop an infection. If you would like advice on how to stop smoking, please speak to a nurse.



How long will I need to take off work?

It depends on what type of job you do. You may need to take two weeks off work and avoid hard exercise. Do not play contact sports for three months after surgery. You can start gentle exercise after two weeks.

Will I have to come back to hospital?

Before you leave hospital, we will make a review appointment for you.

If you had stitches in your temple, you need to go to your GP (home doctor) surgery a week after surgery to have them taken out.

Who can I contact with queries and concerns?

Monday to Friday, 8am – 4pm: contact our Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) on **020 3299 5216**.

After 4pm and at weekends: phone switchboard on **020 3299 9000** and ask to speak to the member of staff on call for Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery.

In an emergency: please go to your local Emergency Department (A&E).

Sharing your information

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.



Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleden Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

Email: **kch-tr.PALS@nhs.net**

You can also contact us by using our online form at

www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.



Corporate Comms: 0806
PL641.2 January 2017
Review date January 2020