

Advice after surgery to repair a fractured lower jaw (mandible)

Information for patients

This leaflet provides advice for patients who have undergone surgery to repair a fractured lower jaw (mandible). If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgical Team.

Important information after surgery

- Pain and swelling are both common. The swelling should peak between 48 to 72 hours after surgery and resolve over 2 weeks.
- Use ice packs daily for the first few days, alongside prescribed or over-the-counter pain relief as advised.
- Temporary lower lip or chin numbness is common. This usually resolves over a few months.
- Regular follow-up with the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Team is essential. Please attend all follow-up appointments and report any changes in bite.

Dietary changes (total 6 weeks)

- For the first 2 weeks after surgery, follow a liquid or pureed diet, for example, smoothies, soup, nutritional shakes and yoghurt.
- After the first 2 weeks, please follow a soft diet for a further 4 weeks: for example, scrambled eggs, rice, bananas and mashed potato.

Antibiotics

- Take antibiotics as prescribed and complete the full course.

Mouth hygiene

- It is important to brush your teeth gently twice a day (a baby toothbrush may be gentler).
- Use chlorhexidine mouthwash three times daily for 1 to 2 weeks.
- Rinse your mouth after each meal with warm salty water.

Elastics or intermaxillary fixation

- Do not remove any elastics or metalwork unless told to do so.
- Report any sudden bite changes, damaged elastics or metalwork.

- Any fixation will be removed 6 to 8 weeks after your operation.
- You will receive an appointment confirmation via text, letter or MyChart (the location for this will be Third floor, Dental Institute, King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London, SE5 9RS)

Alcohol and smoking

- Avoid smoking, vaping and alcohol for the first 4 to 6 weeks to aid healing.

Return to activity

- Avoid straining or heavy lifting for the first 4 weeks.
- Avoid contact sports or high-risk activities for the first 3 months.

When to seek medical attention

- Increasing facial swelling
- Fever or feeling systemically unwell
- Sudden change in your bite
- Leaking pus (discharge)
- Difficulty swallowing or breathing

For any queries, please contact the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgical Team on 020 3299 1740 (from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or go to your nearest A&E Department.

MyChart

Our MyChart app and website lets you securely access parts of your health record with us, giving you more control over your care. To sign up or for help, call us on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.mychart@nhs.net. Visit www.kch.nhs.uk/mychart to find out more.

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. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

Tel: 020 3299 4618

Email: kings.pals@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Interpreting and Accessible Communication Support on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.access@nhs.net