



**Bradford Teaching Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Maxillofacial Unit • Patient Information Leaflet

# Advice for Patients Following Surgery in the Mouth Under General Anaesthetic

Visit the Maxillofacial  
website for more  
information



## 1. Following a general anaesthetic for the first 24 hours:

- It is important that you **do not**:
  - drive or operate heavy machinery
  - care for others or be left alone
  - drink alcohol or take recreational drugs
  - exercise
  - sign any legal documents
- Take 24 - 48 hours off work or school. This depends on how you feel and on the extent of the surgery.
- Please arrange for a family member or friend to look after you for this period.

2. Usually you will have an injection in the mouth whilst you are asleep and this will result in numbness or altered sensation during your recovery from the anaesthetic. Take care and be careful not to bite your tongue, lips or cheeks or burn your mouth with hot drinks until the numbness has worn off which is usually 2 - 3 hours following your procedure.

3. **Do not** rinse your mouth or use mouthwashes for 24 hours after your surgery.

## 4. After 24 hours:

- Dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water.
- Take a mouthful of the warm salt water mixture and hold this in your mouth for one minute at a time.
- Repeat this until you have used the whole glassful of salt water.
- Do this three-four times a day for one week.

5. Keep to a soft diet for a few days; try foods such as soup, mashed potato, rice and pasta. Avoid hard foods such as nuts, crisps and toast.
6. Avoid smoking for at least 48 hours after surgery. If you require help to stop smoking please contact your GP, local pharmacy, speak to any member of our team or contact Bradford District Stop Smoking Service for information and support on 01274 437700.
7. Following surgery it is normal to experience some pain, swelling and bruising. Use painkillers regularly as per the instructions on the packaging. Alternating paracetamol and ibuprofen works well but do not exceed the stated dose which could result in an overdose. Please check that you do not have any allergies before taking the painkillers. If you have any concerns contact the team (as detailed in number 13) or your GP. Take your prescribed medications as normal unless advised otherwise on discharge following your procedure.
8. It is normal to have some jaw stiffness but this should continue to improve in the next few weeks.
9. **The bleeding, at the site of your operation, will usually have stopped by the time you leave hospital. However, if the bleeding starts again and persists:**
  - Take clean gauze (which will be provided by the hospital) or a clean handkerchief.
  - Roll it up.
  - Place it over the area which is bleeding and apply firm pressure by biting on it for 30 minutes without removing it.
  - You may need to repeat this.

11. Do not worry if you feel small fragments of bone. These are the edges of the tooth socket and will disappear as your mouth heals.
12. You may have dissolvable stitches in your mouth which can take up to two weeks to dissolve. We will inform you if we place any non-dissolvable stitches and give you instructions on when to come back to see us to have them removed.
13. If you are worried about your post-operative condition, please contact:

The Oral and Maxillofacial Unit, Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm on 01274 365200.

Or after 5.00pm until 9.00am the Oral and Maxillofacial on call doctor via switchboard on 01274 542200, 7 days a week.

### **People with hearing and speech difficulties**

You can contact us using the Relay UK app. Textphone users will need to dial 18001 ahead of the number to be contacted.

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff to arrange this for you.

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.

**Wristbands:** When you are in hospital it is essential to wear a wristband at all times to ensure your safety during your stay.

The wristband will contain accurate details about you on it including all of the essential information that staff need to identify you correctly and give you the right care. All hospital patients including babies, children and older people should wear the wristband at all times. If you do not have a wristband whilst in hospital, then please ask a member of staff for one. If it comes off or is uncomfortable, ask a member of staff to replace it.

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