

Is there anything else I should know?

If you are 16 or older, you will have your surgery at an adult hospital. Please see our information leaflet on the adult hospital for further information about what to expect from your visit. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask a member of the team and we'll do our best to help.

Should you decide to go ahead with surgery, your surgeon will talk to you about smoking and drinking alcohol. This is because they can affect how well you heal after surgery. It is strongly recommended that you do not smoke or drink in the time leading up to and after your surgery. Please let us know if you need support around this.

This transition leaflet is part of a series aimed at young people and is produced by the North West Cleft Lip and Palate Network.



This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss your treatment with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your treatment. This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

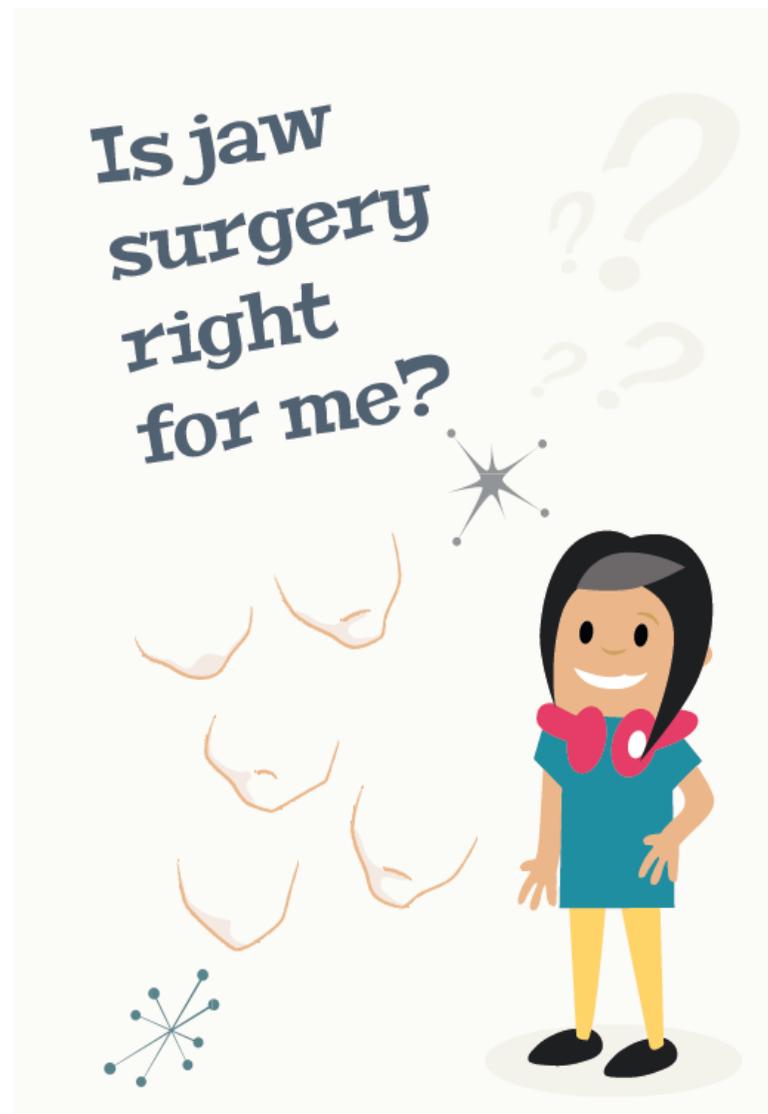
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Cleft Department



Why do people have this surgery?

Some people who were born with a cleft may develop problems with the way their teeth and jaws fit together as they grow up. They may have trouble biting their teeth together properly and eating certain foods may be difficult. The way the jaws come together can also affect how the jaw, teeth and face look.

Who should I talk to if I want to know more about this?

You should let a member of the team know if you have any concerns about your teeth and/or jaws. You will be seen by one of the orthodontists, a specialist who deals with braces and the way your teeth and jaws fit together. They may recommend surgery as part of your treatment. Your surgeon will also meet you in the clinic to assess your jaw and will be able to discuss how surgery may help you.

The decision to have surgery is entirely yours. You will be offered an appointment with a clinical psychologist to help you decide if surgery is the right option for you and to get any support you may need. It is important to remember that you can come back to see the Cleft Team at any age, even as an adult. We don't want you to feel rushed to make a decision.

What happens before Surgery?

Surgery is only one part of your treatment. Before this, you will need to see your orthodontist to have braces fitted. Most people normally need to wear braces for about 18 months before surgery and for a further six months afterwards. During this time you will need to come and see your orthodontist every six weeks to look after your braces.

Sometimes having surgery to move your jaw can change the sound of your speech. You will meet with a speech and language therapist before and after surgery to see if there are any changes, and if there is anything they can do to help.

What happens in surgery?

Surgery is done under general anaesthetic (you would be asleep during surgery). The surgery may be to your upper or lower jaw alone or it may involve both upper and lower jaws. During surgery, your jaw bones are cut and moved in to a new planned position. They are held in their new position by small metal (titanium) plates and screws.

Your surgeon may also recommend taking bone from another part of your body (often your hip or rib) during surgery to help to keep the jaw in the new position.

It is important to look after your teeth before and after surgery. The dentist in our team can give you advice about how to care for your teeth immediately after surgery and in the long term. It is important that you continue to see your own local dentist every six months.

What about after the surgery?

After jaw moving surgery you will be swollen and may have some discomfort but the team at the hospital will help with pain relief. You will stay in hospital until you are managing to eat a soft diet. You will need to eat a soft diet for around one month after the surgery.

Please see our leaflet "What can I eat on a soft food diet" for further information on the types of food you can eat. You will have dissolving stitches inside your mouth, and it is likely that your lips and face may feel a little numb for a while.

After surgery you will need to wear elastic bands in your mouth. These help to guide your jaws into their new position. We advise you to avoid contact sports for at least six weeks whilst your jaw bones heal. After surgery you will be seen by both the surgeon and the orthodontist.