

Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Arthroscopy of the jaw joint

This leaflet is designed to improve your understanding of your forthcoming treatment and it contains answers to many of the common questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like a further explanation please ask your surgeon.

What is arthroscopy?

Arthroscopy is a form of keyhole surgery in which a small telescope is inserted into a joint. This allows the inside of the joint to be examined in great detail. It can diagnose as well as treat problems within the jaw joint.

What does the operation involve?

Arthroscopy is usually carried out under general anaesthesia (this means that you are put to sleep completely). The arthroscope (telescope) is very slender and is introduced into the jaw joint through a small cut in front of the ear. If your surgeon also plans to treat problems within the joint, other fine instruments will be inserted through a second small cut in front of the ear.

What can I expect after surgery?

The area around your jaw joint may be swollen for a couple of days following surgery. The procedure is not a particularly painful one but you may find that you need to take simple painkillers (for example, Ibuprofen) for a couple of days. Most people stay in hospital overnight.

Do I need any time off work?

This varies enormously from person to person and depends on what type of job you do. It is recommended to take one day off work after the operation. It is important to remember that you cannot drive or operate machinery for 24 hours after a general anaesthetic.

What can I expect when I get home?

You will find that your jaw joint may be a little bit uncomfortable and stiff for a few days following surgery. It is usual to rest the jaw joint and eat a soft diet for this

amount of time. Occasionally you can find that your bite may feel different for a few days due to swelling in the joint.

What are the possible problems?

Even though your surgeon looks into your jaw joint with an arthroscope, it may not be possible to treat your problem with this technique. 'Open' jaw joint surgery which involves making a cut in front of the ear is therefore occasionally still necessary. Such open surgery would be carried out on another occasion.



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Polish

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Portuguese

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Cantonese

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Bengali

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