

Arthrocentesis (wash out) of Jaw Joint

Department of Maxillofacial Surgery

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of any forthcoming treatment and contains answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like further explanation please ask.

The problem

The disc of cartilage which lies in your jaw joint has moved out of its normal position between the bones.

What is a jaw joint arthrocentesis?

An arthrocentesis is a procedure during which the jaw joint is washed out with sterile fluid and sometimes steroids. It aims to return the disc of cartilage to its normal position within the joint.

What does the treatment involve?

An arthrocentesis usually takes place under a general anaesthetic, i.e. you will be put to sleep completely. While you are asleep two small needles will be inserted into the jaw joint. One of these needles allows sterile fluid to be pumped into the joint under pressure. The second needle allows fluid to be drained out of the joint.

What is a jaw joint arthrocentesis?

While you are asleep your lower jaw will often be manipulated in an attempt to encourage the disc of cartilage back into its normal position.

How will I feel after the operation?

The area in and around the jaw joint is often uncomfortable for a day or two after the procedure. You may find it necessary to take simple painkillers (e.g. Ibuprofen) during this time. There will also be some swelling in front of your ear. You may also find it difficult to open your jaw for a few weeks.

Will I need another appointment?

You will need to return a few weeks after surgery to have your jaw joint checked by your surgeon. Arthrocentesis is not always successful and even in those people who have an improvement following the procedure it can take several months for this to occur.

Who do I contact if I have concerns following my procedure?

If you are worried and would like further advice, please do not hesitate to contact us. A doctor is available to deal with your concerns 24 hours a day.

During normal working hours, Monday to Friday 8 am until 5 pm please telephone the Maxillofacial clinic where your procedure was carried out:

Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton – 01273 696955 Ext. 4067
Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath – 01444 441881 Ext. 8308

For advice during evenings, weekends and on public holidays, our partner organisation, Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead has a doctor available to assist with any concerns.

Queen Victoria Hospital - 01342 414000 Ext. 6635

Evening hours – Monday to Friday 5 pm until 8 am

Weekend hours – Friday, 5 pm to Monday, 8 am

Public holidays – 24 hours cover.

Please ensure you have your patient reference number to hand when you contact us.

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Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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