**Will I need more than one operation?** Some patients may require more than one operation, such as the correction of the position of the nose and chin; these procedures are usually carried out six-twelve months after orthognathic surgery. They are usually smaller procedures which require a shorter stay in hospital.

**Post- surgical orthodontics:** It is quite common for the orthodontic to continue for a further 6-9 months after surgery.

**Retention and relapse:** At the end of treatment your fixed appliances will be removed and retainers will be fitted. Regular wear of the retainers is essential as this gives you the ability to maintain the new position of the teeth and prevents unwanted movement or relapse.

**When should I see my Dentist?** It is important that your teeth and gums are healthy. You must keep regular check-ups with your dentist throughout the time that you are receiving treatment with the orthodontist. Your dentist will need to monitor your cleaning and the need for any dental treatment as this work is not undertaken by your orthodontist.

**Oral and Maxillofacial**

**Department**

**Orthognathic Surgery**

**Feedback**

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care of treatment, please speak to a member of staff or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

**Telephone:** 01553 613351 or 01553 613343  
**Email:** pals@qehkl.nhs.uk  
**Letter:** PALS, The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King’s Lynn NHS Foundation Trust, Gayton Road, King’s Lynn PE30 4ET

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The type of surgery that you are being considered for is known as Orthognathic surgery. This surgery is to change the position of the teeth and jaws. The purpose is:

* To improve the alignment of your teeth and therefore the way they work
* To improve the relationship between the upper and lower jaws
* To improve the appearance of the face.

**Planning:** Each patient has their treatment individually planned and in order to decide which method of treatment is the best for you, a number of investigations are carried out. Impressions of your teeth are taken to make models of your teeth which are used for planning. X-rays and photographs of your face and jaws are taken. The information together helps the Surgeon and Orthodontist to decide on an overall treatment plan.

**Do I need any teeth extracted?** Extraction of wisdom teeth is often required before orthognathic surgery in order to help with bone healing and fixation. Other teeth may also need to be extracted for orthodontic reasons. You will be given further advice about this in the clinic.

**Surgery:** Surgery is usually undertaken when the facial growth is complete, that is after 17 years for females and 18 years for males. One or two weeks before the operation you will be seen again for a pre assessment appointment where you will have some routine observations. You will be admitted to hospital on the day of your operation. This surgery is carried out under general anaesthesia and is usually performed entirely within the mouth. It may be necessary to fix the jaws together after the operation but with newer techniques this is less likely. Should there be any need to make any incisions on the face; this will be discussed with you in detail prior to the operation.

**After Surgery: Pain and discomfort**- Pain is very rarely a problem and it is carefully controlled with medication immediately post-operatively. Usually, little treatment is required for pain after the first week.

**Swelling**- Your face and lips will be swollen and this resolves over the next three to six weeks. In some patients it may take up to 3 months to settle completely. Steroids are normally given to keep the swelling down. **Altered sensation**- You will almost certainly experience some numbness or tingling on the face, mouth and lips. This is usually temporary and should settle over a period of a few months. Permanent altered sensation can occur in around 10% of cases after surgery to the lower jaw.**Swallowing**- Initially swallowing can be quite difficult but as your become accustomed to the new positioning of the jaws, it quickly improves. A liquidised diet is needed for the first 4 weeks, gradually increasing to a normal diet by 6 weeks. **Jaw fixation**- Should it be necessary to wire the jaws together, then fixation will remain in place for 6-8 weeks. There is usually little discomfort from there fixation wires and most patients become accustomed to the fixation over a day or two. Once wired, the hospital dietician will give advice about when and what to eat. **Bite wafer**- Bite wafer is often fixed onto the brace during surgery and may be left in for 3-4 weeks afterwards. It helps guide your teeth into the new bite position. **Hospital stay**- You will need to be in hospital from 3-5 days. You should allow yourself at least 3 weeks for recovery after surgery. **Sickness**- Vomiting is rare after the operation, however if you feel nauseated, this will be controlled with medication. **Return to work**- Most patients are able to return light duties after 3 weeks of recovery. Manual workers may require more time. Sport activities and foreign travel should be avoided for at least 2 months. **Medication**- You will be given antibiotics to prevent infection as well as other medication for pain as required, **Further treatment**- You will need to be seen at weekly intervals in the outpatient clinic over the first 3 weeks. You will then be seen by your orthodontist 4 weeks after surgery for a check-up and to continue with your normal orthodontic appointments. Long-term follow up is necessary and is usually carried out on an annual basis for up to 2 years.