

University Dental Hospital of Manchester  
Orthodontic Department

## Information for Patients

# Dietary advice after Jaw Surgery

## Why is a good diet after jaw surgery important?

Normally men require 2600 calories and women require 2000 each day. For proper healing, you may need more calories, protein and vitamins than normal. A good diet is also important to reduce complications and to help you get better sooner.

To help meet these requirements, you will need a well-balanced diet and may need to eat more frequently (6-8 times daily).

## Will I lose weight?

After the jaw surgery there are several factors like restricted jaw movement, swelling, pain, dribbling, lack of sensation or feeling in the lips and mouth, and an altered ability to taste which make it more difficult to eat. Because of this you may lose weight.

However, you will have to eat more frequently (6-8 times daily) and will need to have a well-balanced fluid or pureed diet to prevent losing weight.

## How can I make the most of my foods?

You may initially need to eat and drink using a plastic syringe, a small spoon or a straw. This is due to any facial swelling you may have. As this reduces you should be able to drink from a cup and eat with a dessert spoon. When you start with a soft diet you can blend almost anything you are accustomed to eating and drinking.

## What do I need to do before my operation?

As you will only be able to have a fluid and puree diet, you will need a blender or liquidiser to puree meals. It is worth experimenting before your surgery.

You will need a plastic syringe, a small spoon and a large flexible straw.

You will also need bathroom scales. It is worth making a note of your present weight and check your weight once every few days after surgery.



## What happens immediately after my operation?

You will be given fluid via a 'drip' initially and your surgeon will tell you when you can have sips of water. It will be difficult to swallow at first, but this should get better within a few days. A straw or a large syringe will be helpful for the first few days after your surgery. Once you get over this initial phase, you will be able to have soups and milkshakes.

## When can I start eating soft foods?

You can begin to introduce some soft foods when you are able to open and close your mouth freely. You could use a blender or liquidiser to puree your food. Foods should be cooked until tender and if necessary, placed in a blender with lots of suitable liquid e.g. milk, cream, soups, fruit juice.

## When can I start eating solid foods?

Your surgeon will be able to tell you after he has seen you for your first post-operative check-up. It will be around 4-8 weeks before you start with solid foods.

## Will I be able to clean my teeth after surgery?

You can use child sized tooth brushes which are small. Following each meal, clean your mouth properly. Avoid relying solely on food containing high amounts of sugar. Sugar increases the chance of cavities and contains few nutrients.



## Planning your meals

Use the Eat Well Plate below as a guide when planning your daily diet.



## Liquid diet

### Milk and dairy products

Milk can be made more nutritious by fortifying it. To do this add five, heaped tablespoons of dried milk powder to each pint of full cream milk. You may find it dissolves better by first adding a little warm milk to the powder to form a paste and then add the rest of the milk. Try to include at least 1 pint of milk daily. Use milkshake powder or syrup with fortified milk to make a milkshake. For extra energy add cream or ice cream.

## Soups

Try pureeing home-made soups with some cooked meat to improve the flavour and add extra nourishment. Liquidised meat, fish or grated cheese can be added to soups.

Cream is a good way to enrich soups and packet soups can be made using fortified milk. Adding Marmite or Bovril to soup or gravy can also provide other valuable vitamins.

## Fruits

Fruit has little protein, so whenever possible, combine it with yogurt or an egg.

## Teas and Coffees

Tea and coffee, by themselves, have little nutritional value. Try to add fruit juices or heavy cream to increase the calorific and nutrient content.

## Soft diet meals

Many everyday foods are naturally soft enough for you to eat. Other foods can be softened by mixing with extra sauce or gravy.

### Breakfast ideas

- Weetabix with full cream milk and sugar or honey.
- Porridge or instant oats made with full cream milk and sugar.
- Smooth full cream yoghurt (try with mashed banana or fruit puree).
- Scrambled egg with grated cheese.
- Spaghetti hoops.

### Lunch and evening meal ideas

- Thick smooth soups e.g. cream of lentil, vegetable, chicken or tomato.
- Finely minced or pureed meat and gravy.
- Pureed pasta with tomato or cheese sauce.
- Meat, poultry and alternatives. Many well-cooked, tinned or ready-cooked meals can be served with extra sauce or gravy.
- Minced quorn, textured vegetable protein, or tofu are suitable alternatives for vegetarians. Also try foods made with lentils (dhal).
- Mashed potato (you can add some milk or cheese).
- Flaked boneless fish (not fingers or other breaded fish, because of the crumb coating which could irritate your sore mouth).
- Pureed vegetables (for example squash, sweet potato, swede, carrot, parsnip). They can be creamed with butter or margarine.

### Desserts and puddings

- Fruit smoothies, for example banana.
- Smooth milk puddings e.g. rice pudding, semolina, custard.
- Soft sponge pureed with custard or cream.
- Pureed, stewed or tinned fruit with custard, cream or evaporated milk.
- Smooth yoghurt, fromage frais, instant whip and mousses.
- Blancmange, fruit fools, crème caramel, milk jelly, jelly, ice cream and sorbet.

**Nutrient drinks**

Buildup and Complan can be taken as drink between meals as an occasional meal replacement. If your surgeon thinks you need a food supplement, they will prescribe special nutritional supplements like Fortisip, Fortjuce and Forticreme.



If you require any further information or advice you can contact the department on (0161) 275 6700 to speak to an orthodontic nurse who will be able to help you with your enquiry. This number is available Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

**Orthodontics Reception**

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Patient Name	Instruction given	Comments

Nurse signature:

Patient/ Parent/ Guardian signature: