

Genioplasty (Chin Surgery)

The profile of your chin needs correction because the bones of your face and jaws are out of balance with each other. Surgery to change position of the chin is called genioplasty. The surgery will take place under a general anaesthetic, ie: you are going to be put to sleep completely. Genioplasty is often carried out at the same time as other corrective surgery on your jaws but you may well find that your surgeon has advised you to have it carried out at a later stage.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is carried out from the inside of your mouth so that there are no visible scars on the skin of your face. A cut is made through the gum on the inside of the lower lip to gain access to the lower jaw bone and chin. The chin is then cut with a small saw to allow it to be broken in a controlled manner. It is then moved into its new position and held in place with small metal plates and screws. The gum inside the mouth is stitched back into place with dissolvable stitches that can take a fortnight or even longer to fall out.

What can I expect after the operation?

Perhaps surprisingly it is not a particularly painful operation but it is still likely to be sore and regular painkillers will be arranged for you. The discomfort is usually worse for the first few days although it may take a couple of weeks to completely disappear. It is also necessary to make sure that the area heals without any infection and so you will be given antibiotics through a vein in your arm whilst you are in hospital. You will be sent home with painkillers and a course of antibiotics.

Immediately after the operation your chin will feel swollen and tight. Swelling and bruising is variable but is generally worse on the second or third day after the operation. The swelling can be reduced by using cold compresses and sleeping propped upright for a few days. Most of the swelling can disappear after a fortnight but there is often some subtle swelling that can take several months to disappear although only you and your family are likely to notice this.

Can I eat normally after surgery?

If you are having a genioplasty carried out on its own you should have little problem with eating although you may well start with a soft diet and then gradually build up to normal food over a few days.

How long will I be in hospital?

This obviously varies from person to person but most patients are only in hospital overnight.

Do I need to take any time off work?

This varies enormously from person to person and depends on what kind of work you do. We recommend that most people have around a week off work if they are having just a genioplasty carried out. It is important to remember that you will not be able to drive or operate machinery for 48 hours after your general anaesthetic.

What are the possible problems?

There are potential complications with any operation. Fortunately with this type of surgery complications are rare and may not happen to you. However it is important that you are aware of some of them and have the opportunity to discuss them with your surgeon.

Bleeding – some oozing from the cuts inside your mouth on the night of operation is normal and to be expected. Significant bleeding is very unusual but should it occur it can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the area for at least 10 minutes with a rolled up handkerchief or swab.

Numbness – your bottom lip will be numb and tingly after the operation, similar to the sensation after having an injection at the dentist. This numbness may take several months to disappear and in a minority of patients may last for ever.

Infection – the small plates and screws that hold your jaw in its new position are usually left in place permanently. Occasionally they can become infected and need to be removed but if this happens it is not normally a problem until several

months after surgery. The metal that is used is titanium which does not set off metal detectors in airports etc.

Will I need further appointments?

A review appointment will be arranged before you leave hospital to see both your surgeon and orthodontist.

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