

Arthrocentesis (Wash out) of Jaw Joint

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. 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.

Will anything else be done at the same time?

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.