

# Arthroscopy of the Jaw Joint

Arthroscopy is a form of keyhole surgery in which a small telescope is inserted into a joint. This allows the inside of the joint to be examined in detail. It can diagnose as well as treat problems within the jaw joint.

## What does the operation involve?

Arthroscopy is usually carried out under general anesthesia (i.e., you are put to sleep completely). The arthroscope (telescope) is very slender and is introduced into the jaw joint through a small cut in front of the ear. If your surgeon also plans to treat problems within the joint other fine instruments will be inserted through a second small cut.

## What can I expect after surgery?

The area around your jaw joint may be swollen for a couple of days following surgery. The procedure is not a particularly painful one, but you may find that you need to take simple painkillers (e.g., Ibuprofen) for a couple of days. Most people stay in hospital overnight.

## Do I need any time off work?

This varies enormously from person to person and depends on what type of job you do. Most people require a couple of days off work. It is important to remember that you cannot drive or operate machinery for 48 hours after a general anaesthetic.

## What can I expect when I get home?

You will find that your jaw joint may be a little bit uncomfortable and stiff for a few days following surgery. It is usual to rest the jaw joint and eat a soft diet for this amount of time. Occasionally you can find that your bite may change for a couple of weeks.

## What are the possible problems?

Even though your surgeon investigates your jaw joint with an arthroscope it may not be possible to treat your problem with this technique. “Open” jaw joint surgery which involves making a cut in front of the ear is therefore occasionally still necessary. Such open surgery would be carried out on another occasion.