
Trauma and injury to the face, mouth and jaws

What sort of injuries do the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Department at Addenbrooke's treat?

Facial and oral injuries have a variety of causes including accidents, sporting injuries, assault or self-harm.

Injuries can be medical or surgical emergencies or requests to treat older injuries that could have improved cosmetic or functional features.

In the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Department, we are used to treating people who have had accidents, assaults or who have self-harmed, and won't judge you on the causes of the injury just help you get the best functional and aesthetic result.

I am worried that I will be scarred?

Facial injury can be distressing, especially in the short-term when your face can be painful and swollen.

With high-quality care and treatment, and giving the body time to heal itself, your appearance and function will improve considerably and return towards normal.

How long will I have scars on my face?

Scars take 9-12 months to 'settle down'. They go through various stages (according to their stage of healing) and become red, hard and raised initially before becoming lighter in colour and softening with time.

Your oral and maxillofacial surgeon will be able to give you a clearer idea of how much scarring you might be expected to have and what the options might be in the short-long term.

I have some new cuts on my face, how will these be treated?

Usually, you will have treatment for new lacerations in Accident and Emergency at Addenbrooke's.

Lacerations (cuts) on the face will be very carefully sutured (stitched).

Any cuts to the skin will leave a scar but it might be a very small one.

There is no such thing as invisible mending, however, we are especially careful on the face because 'our face is our stage to the world'. These sutures (stitches) will need to be removed after 5-7 days, usually in the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Outpatient Department.

You will be prescribed some antibiotic ointment to apply on the stitched wound regularly. This is to be used on the wound 3- 4 times per day until the stitches are taken out.

Once the skin has healed, massaging 'bland' hand or face cream over the area also helps soften the area sooner.

I have some older scars on my face from lacerations, can anything be done to make them less obvious?

If, after 12 months, you are unhappy with the appearance of your injuries then do discuss the possibility of further treatment with your oral and maxillofacial surgeon.

Will I need to have the stitches in my mouth taken out?

Usually oral and maxillofacial surgeons use dissolving sutures (stitches) inside the mouth, which won't need to be removed.

What should I do if I have had stitches in my mouth?

If you have had any type of recent procedure in your mouth, particularly after an injury or trauma, it is very important to keep your mouth clean. This is to prevent infection and also for your own comfort.

We recommend warm salty or antiseptic mouthwashes 3-4 times a day, as well as gentle brushing of the teeth and gums.