

Facial implants



Information for patients

Department of Maxillofacial Surgery, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals

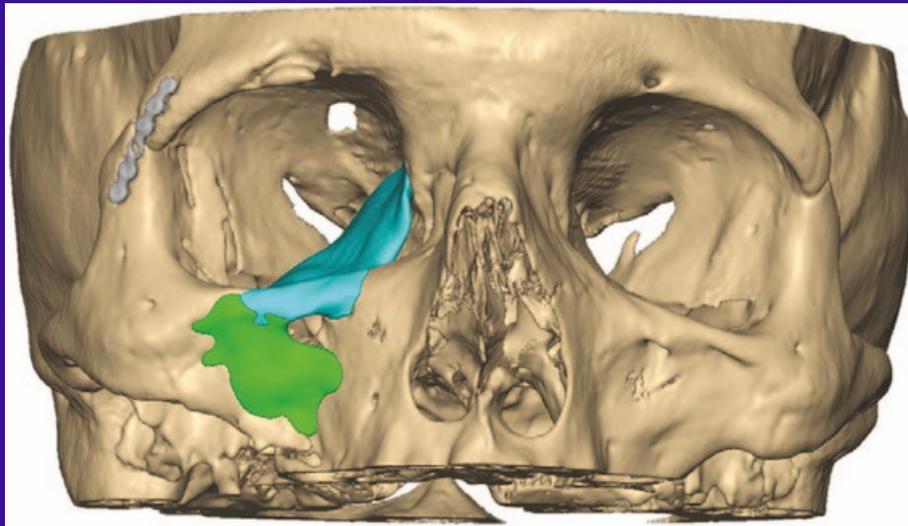


Figure 1. 3D skull showing implant reconstruction of the cheek

This leaflet is designed to help you understand what is involved in having a facial implant. It explains some of the common side effects and complications associated with the procedure that you may need to be aware of.

It is not meant to replace discussion between you and your surgical team, but it may help to answer some of your queries. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

What are facial implants?

Facial implants are custom made implants used to reconstruct the face. They are usually made from Medpor or from PEEK (Polyethetherketone) or titanium. All materials have been commonly and successfully used in surgery for many years. Custom made implants are made following a CT scan of the bony structures of your face and are bespoke and personal to you.

Who will be treating me?

Your treatment is carried out within Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and is led by a team of Consultants which might include a Maxillofacial Surgeon and an Ophthalmic Surgeon. Our Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons have received full surgical training and all have dental expertise.

All surgeons are under the General Medical Council Specialist for Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery. Sometimes other health professionals may need to be involved in your care. This might include dieticians, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists.

Why do I need surgery?

We only perform this type of surgery if the implant is appropriate for you and you would like to receive treatment.

Facial implants have been used for people who have an under-development of the mid part of the face with an overall flatter appearance.

If you have sustained previous trauma to your cheekbone (zygoma), then a facial implant can be helpful in reconstructing the face reducing flatness and improving your overall symmetry.

If you have a congenital asymmetry of the face, implants of the cheek (zygoma) and mandible can also be used to help restore and improve the symmetry.

What will happen before surgery?

When you are ready for your operation, you will be invited to a planning appointment with the hospital team who will be treating you. At this appointment you will be able discuss your expectations and desires about the surgery. Planning continues with the production of your facial implant which we fit onto the bones in your face. To make these facial implants, you will need to have a CBCT scan. A CBCT scan is a low dose x-ray examination which produces a very precise 3D image of the bones of your face.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is usually carried out inside the mouth so that there are no external scars.

The placement of the facial implants are generally placed under general anaesthetic, sometimes they can be performed under local anaesthesia with or without sedation.

Lower jaw implants (mandibular patient specific implants)

During this surgery a small incision is made in the mouth next to the lower back teeth and the implants are placed directly onto the jaw. They are held in place with two to three small titanium screws to prevent any movement following surgery. The wounds are then closed with dissolving stitches.

Chin implant

Chin implants are placed by an incision made from inside the mouth or from an incision made directly under the chin. The chin implant is usually placed next to the chin before being fixed in position with small titanium screws. The wound is then closed using stitches in the mouth and/or under the chin.

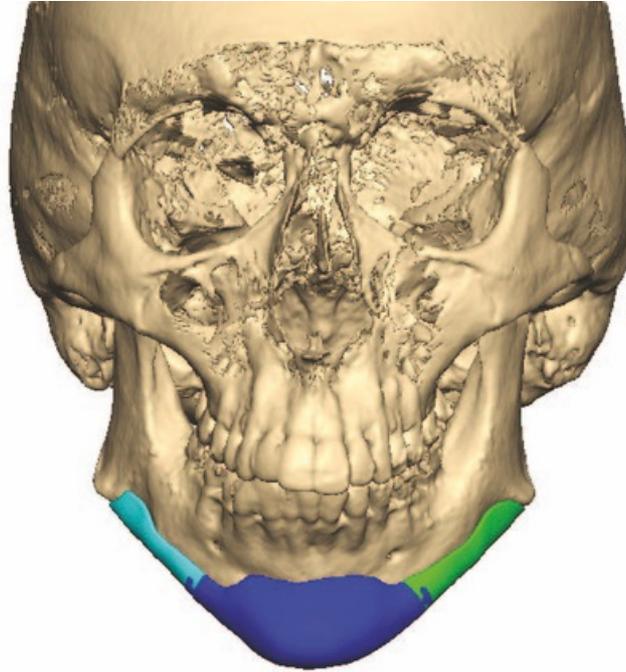


Figure 2. 3D skull showing implant reconstruction of the lower jaw

Cheek bone implants (zygoma patient specific implants)

Cheek bone implants involve a small incision being made in the mouth above the upper teeth. These implants are placed directly onto the cheek bone and screwed into the bone with small titanium screws to prevent any movement following surgery. The wound in the mouth is then closed with dissolving stitches.

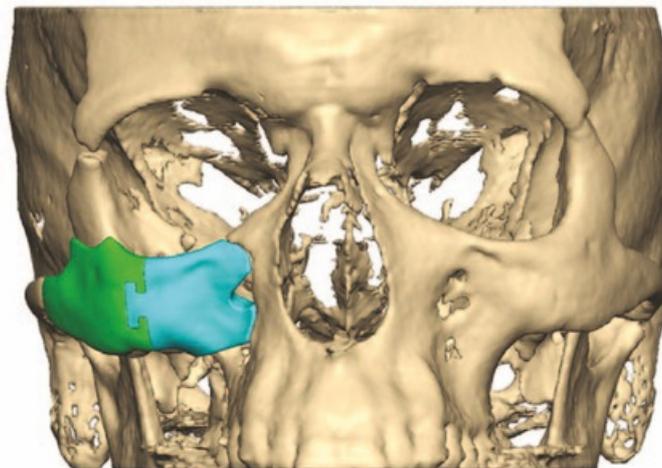


Figure 3. 3D skull showing implant reconstruction of the right cheek (zygoma)

What are the possible complications associated with this operation?

This is usually a very safe procedure which is carried out regularly in this hospital by specialised and experienced clinical staff. Complications with this type of surgery are fortunately rare and may not apply to you, but it is important that you are aware of them.

The most commonly reported ones are **numbness and altered sensation** of the upper teeth, upper lip and cheek.

If a mandibular (lower jaw and chin) implant is placed there is the risk of numbness to the lower lip and chin. If a mandibular or chin implant is placed, we would hope that any altered sensation would be temporary, but there is a risk that it could be permanent.

Initially following the surgery, you will expect to have some **soresness, swelling and tightness**, but this will settle with time.

Other complications include **bleeding, infection, facial asymmetry and numbness** which is usually temporary and can take a few weeks to settle.

Implant infection may mean that the implant needs removal and if this occurs, then we would need to wait until the tissues have totally healed before another implant could be considered.

It may also be possible to **feel the edges of the implant** under the skin if you have thin skin.

With all facial implants, there is also the risk of **dissatisfaction with appearance** after the surgery.

Your surgeon will discuss your individual risks.

What are the risks of having a general anaesthetic?

This type of treatment is not compulsory or life saving for a patient and whilst there is a very small risk of not waking up after a general anaesthetic, this must be balanced with how much your face is a concern to you and whether an operation can improve your overall facial balance.

Straight after a general anaesthetic, you may feel tired, dizzy or weak. You must have someone to collect you and stay with you for the first 24 hours. During the first 24 hours, you must not drive or operate any machinery, sign any legal documents or make any important decisions. You should also avoid drinking any alcohol. You may feel weak or dizzy at times during your first 7 – 10 days. If this happens, sit down until the feeling passes. You may also have postoperative 'blues' or depression, though this should soon pass.

How long will I be in hospital?

This depends on you as an individual, but most patients stay in hospital overnight. Some implants can be placed as a day procedure, but most patients stay in hospital for one night after surgery.

How long will it take to recover?

People vary in their speed of recovery, but you should expect seven to ten days off work following the surgery and you should avoid any strenuous sports for four to six months. Gentle exercise can be resumed at three to four weeks after surgery.

There will be some gentle settling of the soft tissues before the final results of the surgery become apparent.

What follow up appointments will there be?

We would aim to see you back in our clinic for a follow up appointment one week, three months and then six months after your surgery.

Can I eat normally after surgery?

For the first few days you will be asked to keep to a soft diet to aid healing after surgery. Chewing can also be more painful and sore if chewing hard foods.

Can I brush my teeth?

It is important that you keep your mouth as clean as possible for the first few weeks after surgery to prevent infection. It will be sore and you may find it difficult to clean your teeth around the stitches. Try using a soft small headed toothbrush, such as a child's toothbrush.

Starting the day after your surgery, gently rinse your mouth out with a mouthwash of warm salty water (dissolve a flat teaspoon of table salt in a cup of warm water) three times a day for five to seven days to keep it free from any food remains. We will give you a mouthwash to start using in hospital and to take home with you. Please note that mouth washing does not replace brushing your teeth.

What else can I do to help my recovery?

You will also be given a short course of oral antibiotics to be taken following the surgery. It is important that you finish the course.

It is important that you **do not smoke** as this will make it more likely that you develop an infection. If you would like advice on how to stop smoking, please speak to a nurse or your GP.

If you require more information about stopping smoking, please ask a member of staff before your procedure. To help with giving up smoking, call the NHS Stop Smoking Helpline on 0800 022 4332 or go to www.smokefree.nhs.uk.

What do I need to look out for when I go home?

You will be swollen where you have had your surgery. Pain and discomfort should be controlled with regular painkillers. Some temporary numbness of your face is common.

Please contact your team urgently if you notice any of the following:

- the implant is visible in the mouth
- any signs of infection
- high temperature
- redness
- discharge

Who can I contact with queries and concerns?

You can contact the maxillofacial department on **0114 271 7854** between the hours of 9:00am – 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Out of hours, please contact the on-call maxillofacial surgeon at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield, on **0114 271 1900**.

Further information

Please feel free to contact your team if you have any further questions.

Your Consultant Maxillofacial Surgeon _____

Questions and notes

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