



DR NOAH TEO

Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon

Patient Information - Jaw Misalignment Surgery



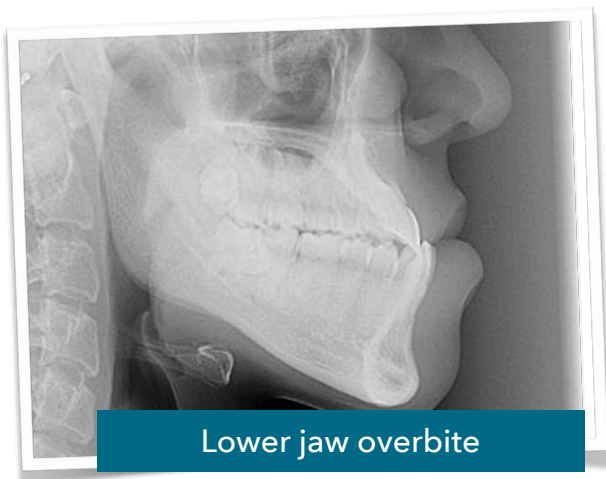
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Jaw Alignment Surgery

Dr Noah Teo has been performing and teaching junior surgeons to do this surgery. Here are some of the commonly asked questions.



Why is Jaw Alignment Surgery needed?

Most do this to eat better and talk better. Some others do this to improve self confidence, some to sleep better.

The most common situation is when teeth cannot meet in a meaningful way. For example, they can't bite using their front teeth because they don't touch. Some others are self conscious because their lower jaws are obvious or not symmetrical. Some choke when they sleep because the lower jaws are too far backward.

What actually happened?

Teeth don't meet in a meaningful way because the jawbone carrying them has grown too much or too little, sometime in a lopsided way. This results in the jawbone being too forward or backward.

The aim is to bring the jawbones (and hence the teeth) into a harmonious relationship to restore form and function.

Can I correct it with braces alone?



Misaligned Bite

Braces (Orthodontics) gives very nice results, but there are limitations when the jaw relationship is not harmonious.



After alignment surgery*

(Different Patient, For illustration only)

For conditions like choking during sleep (obstructive sleep apnea), braces is usually not enough, You should discuss this with your braces care provider.

Is Jaw Surgery alone without braces ok?

No. Jaw Alignment surgery needs to be combined with Braces to give you an optimal bite in the end. This is considered the standard of care among Jaw Surgeons and Orthodontists. An optimal upper and lower teeth relationship is important for chewing and digestion. An uncorrected bite could even lead to teeth and jaw problems in the long term.

Rarely do special situations where an expert in teeth biting ("occlusion") like an orthodontist feel there is no need for followup braces happen.

**Jaw Alignment surgery with Braces is
considered the Standard of Care**

It sounds Complicated!

Techniques of Jaw Alignment Surgery has been taught and performed by generations of Surgeons. Every Maxillofacial Surgeon undergoes hours of intensive training to ensure they do their best for their patients.

How is it done?

You will need to be assessed by Dr Noah and a braces practitioner before you embark on this journey. They will agree on a treatment plan which will be discussed in detail with you. Throughout the journey, your care providers will monitor your progress for you.

X-rays (usually a CT scan) and records will be taken nearer the surgery date. This will be used for planning of the procedure.

You will be fully asleep (General Anesthesia) throughout. There will be no unsightly scars on the skin except for a small puncture which heals like how a pimple does. Your new jaw position will be held firmly in place by surgery grade titanium devices.

You will wake up with your bite in the ideal position. You should be as comfortable as medicine will be given while you sleep. You may be able to go home on the same day, or require a few nights stay. Home leave will be given as you rest at home.

What are the risks?

The most common risk is a persistent feeling of numbness of the lip and chin. Most patients are able to lead a normal life after they get used to this sensation. Your doctor should discuss the implications for you. Most numbness takes about 6 months to 1 year to normalise.

There is also a risk of change of jaw position from the planned position. This happens when you are not compliant with the care plan your doctor has given you, or because of other factors like strong muscle pull. Most changes are small and are managed with the ongoing braces.

The medical devices placed during surgery to temporary secure your jaw position may need removal after sometime. It's usually due to patient preference or a minor infection. Their removal would not affect bone stability since healing would have taken place.

There are other risks like bleeding, pain and infection. These can be controllable and medicine will be given to help you. You can seek help at clinic during day time or the nearest hospital at night.

While these common risks complications are not exhaustive, please feel free to discuss any concerns you have with Dr Noah.

What are the alternatives?

Other alternative include “distraction osteogenesis” where devices are placed in the jawbone to gradually guide bone development. This is a lengthy process that requires high compliance and may leave you with an unsightly scar.

Depending on your treatment objective, you could decide to accept the limitations of braces and not have the surgery. This discussion is best be done at the beginning to give you the best possible outcome.

Is the “after” painful? How can I cope with post surgery diet and care?

Most patients remain comfortable while recovering at home. This is because of our modern understanding of painkiller medicines.

There is no special care required at home except for a modified diet plan for the initial weeks. Dr Noah will discuss your diet plan with you and your family member.

Most Patients are comfortable during recovery because of modern advances and understanding of Painkillers

You can slowly progress from soup to soft mushy food (Ice Cream, tofu, eggs etc) to easy to chew food (cheese, some fish, some noodle, some vegetables) and finally your normal diet. These can be easily prepared with your daily kitchen setup.

Dieticians are available on request to discuss your nutrition and food requirements should you require them.

What about the fees?

Financial Counselling is an important part of the treatment. Part of the surgery fees can be claimed from Medisave. Some insurance plans would cover the fees as well. Dr Noah will be happy to discuss your fees with you clearly before you start treatment. Some companies also cover hospitalization fees in their medical benefits.



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