

Head and Neck

Laser Excision of the Mouth

Introduction

This leaflet aims to explain your forthcoming treatment and answer many of the common questions. If you would like more information please ask.

Why do I need laser treatment?

You have an area inside your mouth that needs to be removed and the surgeon who examined you has decided that laser treatment would be best for you.

Benefits of laser treatment

Laser treatment has many advantages over other types of surgery. It tends to produce less bleeding, swelling and pain.

What does the treatment involve?

Laser treatment usually takes place under a general anaesthetic, so you will be asleep. While you are asleep your surgeon will remove the affected area in your mouth with the laser. If the area being removed is cancerous or pre-cancerous, they will also remove some tissue surrounding the area that appears normal, to leave a safety margin.

How will I feel after the treatment?

Although laser treatment tends to be less painful than other forms of surgery, you will still have some discomfort. Your doctor will arrange painkillers for you.

Will there be much bleeding?



Patient Information

Laser surgery causes little bleeding. Immediately following surgery the area will look charred. This is normal.

If the area oozes or bleeds following surgery it can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the area for at least 10 minutes with a rolled up handkerchief or swab. If the bleeding does not stop please contact the hospital.

Are there any other things I should do after treatment?

- On the day of surgery you should avoid rinsing your mouth out vigorously as this may cause bleeding.
- You should clean your teeth as normally as possible but be careful in the area close to the laser wound.
- If you find that food sticks to the wound then the area can be gently rinsed with a mouthwash or warm salt water (dissolve a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) commencing on the day after surgery.

How long will the laser wound take to heal?

The wound may look quite large immediately after your treatment but it should heal very quickly. After a week or so you will notice a yellow or white slough appearing over the area. This is normal and does not mean it is infected.

It will take about four weeks to heal completely. By the end of this time it will appear almost normal since the surrounding skin of the mouth will grow over it to produce a pink appearance.

When can I return to work?

This largely depends on your job and how you feel after the procedure. Most people require a week or so off work.

Follow up

A review appointment will be arranged to see you to check your wound is healing properly. If you had tissue removed during surgery we will look at it under a microscope and discuss the results with you.

Patient Information

Contact details

A Nurse will talk to you about what to expect after your operation.

If you have questions or concerns please contact your Macmillan Head and Neck Clinical Nurse Specialists: telephone 024 7696 6452

Further Information

Macmillan Cancer Information Centre - 024 7696 6052

Our cancer information specialist can offer free support, practical advice and information to anyone affected by cancer. No appointments are required and an answering machine facility is available. The Centre is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm, and is located on the ground floor in the main entrance.

This leaflet is based on information provided by BAOMS (British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons)

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6052 and we will do our best to meet your need

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

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