

Surgical Orthodontics

Surgical orthodontics, also known as orthognathic surgery, is a combination treatment using orthodontics and surgery to correct severe cases where the problem is related to the poor position of the jaw bones rather than just the teeth. The oral and maxillofacial surgeon and orthodontist work together to plan the combined approach and timing for the best possible aesthetic and functional outcome.

When might surgical orthodontics be needed?

Surgical orthodontics may be used to treat adults with improper bites or other aesthetic concerns. Usually the surgery is carried out after most jaw growth has finished, which means after age 16 for girls and 18 for boys. A combination treatment using both surgery and orthodontics is suggested when the jaws do not relate to each other correctly, and a proper bite cannot be achieved with orthodontic treatment alone. Orthognathic surgery will position the upper and lower jaws correctly, with orthodontic braces moving the teeth into their correct positions prior to the surgery.

How do I know if I need orthognathic surgery?

Your orthodontist can tell you if orthognathic surgery is needed as part of your treatment. Depending on the severity of your case and the alignment of your jaw, you may or may not need surgery. Sometimes treatment options including/not including surgery can be reviewed, with the advantages of including surgery outlined.

How does orthognathic surgery work?

An oral and maxillofacial surgeon will perform your orthognathic surgery, and the surgery will take place in a hospital. Orthognathic surgery can take several hours depending on each individual case and you will need to schedule some time away from work and school during the healing process. After your jaw has healed, your orthodontist will once again “fine-tune” your bite. Orthodontic braces are worn before, during and after the surgery, with most braces being removed within three to six to months following surgery. After your braces are removed, you will wear a retainer to help maintain your new smile.

What are the risks associated with orthognathic surgery?

As with any surgical procedure, there may be certain risks of having orthognathic surgery. However, the process of orthognathic surgery is not new, and it has been performed for many years in practices and hospitals. If surgery is suggested, we routinely refer you on to the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon who will carry out the procedure, and he will review the planned procedure, show computerised animations of the proposed changes and answer all your concerns regarding the procedure and possible risks.

What are the rewards of having orthognathic surgery?

For many patients, the most important reward of having orthognathic surgery is achieving a beautiful, healthy smile that lasts a lifetime. Whether you need orthodontic treatment to correct a bad bite, malocclusion, or jaw abnormality, orthognathic surgery can help restore your confidence and leave you smiling with confidence for many years to come.

