

Jaw Surgery and Orthognathic Treatment - A Specialist Hospital Procedure

Canonical:

<https://directory.coredental.com.au/jaw-surgery-and-orthognathic-treatment-a-specialist-hospital-procedure/>

Description:

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Details:

When Braces Alone Are Not Enough

Most orthodontic problems can be corrected with braces or clear aligners. But some conditions involve the jaw bones themselves - not just the teeth. When the upper jaw, lower jaw, or both are significantly out of alignment, orthodontic appliances alone cannot achieve a stable, functional result. These cases require orthognathic (jaw) surgery.

Orthognathic treatment is a coordinated process involving a specialist orthodontist and a specialist oral and maxillofacial surgeon working together over months or years. It is one of the most complex procedures in dentistry, and it requires a level of specialist collaboration that very few practices can provide.

Conditions That May Require Jaw Surgery

Jaw surgery is considered when the skeletal relationship between the upper and lower jaws is the source of the problem. Common presentations include:

- **Underbite (Class III malocclusion)** - the lower jaw protrudes beyond the upper jaw, affecting both function and appearance - **Significant overbite (Class II malocclusion)** - the upper jaw sits too far forward relative to the lower jaw, or the lower jaw is recessed - **Open bite** - the front teeth do not meet when the back teeth are closed, making biting into food difficult - **Facial asymmetry** - one side of the jaw has grown differently from the other, causing an uneven bite and appearance - **Airway compromise** - a recessed lower jaw that contributes to obstructive sleep apnoea

These are not cosmetic concerns alone. Jaw misalignment affects chewing, speaking, breathing, joint health, and long-term dental stability.

The Orthognathic Treatment Process

Orthognathic treatment typically involves three phases:

1. **Pre-surgical orthodontics** - braces or aligners are used to move the teeth into the correct position relative to their own jaw. This can take 12 to 18 months and is essential preparation for surgery.
2. **Surgery** - performed under general anaesthesia in a hospital setting by a specialist oral and maxillofacial surgeon. The jaw bones are repositioned and fixed with titanium plates and screws.

Recovery typically involves several weeks of modified diet and activity.

3. **Post-surgical orthodontics** - fine-tuning the bite after the jaws have healed in their new position. This phase usually takes several months.

Throughout this process, the specialist orthodontist and specialist oral surgeon must work closely together. Treatment planning, timing, and execution all depend on this collaboration.

Why This Requires a Specialist Centre

Orthognathic treatment is not something a general dentist or even a general orthodontist manages independently. It requires registered specialist orthodontists and registered specialist oral and maxillofacial surgeons who routinely perform these procedures and work as a coordinated team.

At the Collins Street Specialist Centre (CSSC) on Level 8 of the Manchester Unity Building in Melbourne's CBD, the Smile Solutions Group engages over 80 clinicians, including 25 or more registered specialists. The specialist orthodontists and oral surgeons at CSSC work together on orthognathic cases as an integrated team - planning together, reviewing progress together, and managing the surgical and orthodontic phases as a unified treatment.

With over 300,000 patients treated across 33 years, the Smile Solutions Group has the depth of experience to manage even the most complex jaw surgery cases.

How Core Dental Identifies the Need

Core Dental orthodontists and general dentists across suburban Melbourne often identify the need for orthognathic assessment during routine consultations. A patient presenting for orthodontic treatment may have a jaw discrepancy that braces alone cannot correct. A general dentist may notice signs of jaw asymmetry, chronic joint pain, or bite problems that suggest a skeletal issue.

When this happens, the referral pathway within the Smile Solutions Group connects the patient directly to the specialist team at CSSC. There is no need to search externally for a surgeon, coordinate between separate practices, or piece together a treatment plan from different providers.

If you or your child have been told that jaw surgery may be needed, or if you have concerns about jaw alignment that braces have not resolved, speak with your Core Dental dentist about a specialist referral.

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