

Jaw Implants

(Chin and Jawline Augmentation using Medpor® Implants)

A guide to your procedure, consent, and recovery

Introduction

This leaflet has been prepared to help you understand the procedure you have been recommended — augmentation of the chin and/or jawline using a custom or pre-formed facial implant. It is designed to support your consent process and to provide guidance for your recovery after the procedure.

Please read this leaflet carefully before your appointment. You are encouraged to write down any questions you may have and raise them with Mr McDonald during your consultation. Mr McDonald will discuss your individual circumstances, the proposed treatment plan, and any specific considerations that apply to you.

What Is Jaw Implant Surgery?

Jaw implant surgery uses a solid implant placed directly onto the underlying bone to augment the shape and projection of the chin and/or jawline. This can improve facial harmony, create a stronger jawline, enhance the definition of the lower face, and bring better balance to the overall facial profile.

Mr McDonald uses Medpor® (porous polyethylene) implants. Unlike silicone implants, Medpor® has a porous structure that allows your own tissue to grow into the implant over time. This promotes stable, long-term integration with the surrounding tissue and bone, significantly reducing the risks of implant movement and the need for removal. Medpor® has a well-established long-term safety record in facial surgery.

The procedure is performed under a general anaesthetic and is carried out entirely through a small incision inside the mouth, between the lower lip and the gum. There is no external skin incision and no visible scar on the face or chin.

Why Has This Been Recommended?

Jaw implant surgery may be recommended for one or more of the following reasons:

- To increase the projection or definition of the chin
- To improve the width or angularity of the jawline
- To correct or improve facial asymmetry of the lower face
- To enhance the balance and harmony of the facial profile
- As part of a combined treatment plan alongside other facial procedures

Mr McDonald will discuss what is most appropriate for your individual anatomy and goals during your consultation. It is important to note that jaw implants change the structure of the lower face only. They will not directly alter the appearance of your lips, nose, cheeks, or neck. For optimal facial balance, implant surgery is sometimes recommended alongside other procedures, such as a neck lift or chin reshaping (genioplasty), and Mr McDonald will advise you on the most appropriate approach for you.

About the Procedure

Type of Anaesthesia

Jaw implant surgery is performed under a general anaesthetic. You will be asleep throughout the procedure and will not feel anything. Local anaesthetic is also injected into the surgical area to reduce bleeding and post-operative discomfort.

What Happens During the Procedure?

The surgical steps typically involved are as follows:

- A small incision is made on the inside of the lower lip, between the lip and the gum. There is no external incision and no visible scar on the skin.
- The soft tissue is gently lifted from the surface of the jaw and chin bone to create a precise pocket to receive the implant.
- A Medpor® implant, selected or shaped to match your anatomy and planned result, is positioned directly onto the bone and secured in place. Fixation may be achieved with small titanium screws, sutures, or a combination of both, depending on the site and implant design.
- The incision inside the mouth is closed with dissolvable stitches, which typically dissolve within two to three weeks.

The procedure typically takes around two hours, depending on the extent of augmentation required.

Risks and Complications

As with all surgical procedures, jaw implant surgery carries some risks. Your surgeon will discuss these with you in detail, particularly any risks that are specific to your situation. It is important that you understand these risks before consenting to treatment.

Common (Affecting More Than 1 in 10 Patients)

- **Swelling and Bruising (expected):** Significant swelling and bruising around the jaw, chin, and lower face are expected and can take several weeks to fully resolve. The majority of swelling subsides within a month, but subtle changes can continue for up to six months.
- **Numbness or Altered Sensation of the Lower Lip and Chin:** Numbness or altered feeling in the lower lip, chin, and surrounding skin is very common following jaw implant surgery. This occurs due to stretching or temporary pressure on the mental nerve, which supplies sensation to these areas. In most patients, sensation returns gradually over several weeks to months as the nerve recovers. Patients should be aware that this numbness may at times feel disconcerting, particularly in the early weeks.
- **Pain and Discomfort:** Discomfort, tightness, and a feeling of pressure over the jaw are expected and are usually well-controlled with prescribed pain medication. Initial difficulty with lip movements and eating is normal.

Less Common (Affecting 1 in 10 to 1 in 100 Patients)

- **Implant Infection:** Infection is an important risk with any implanted device. Despite the favourable safety profile of Medpor®, infection can occur, typically presenting as increasing pain, swelling, redness, or discharge in the weeks following surgery. Most early infections can be treated successfully with antibiotics. However, in some cases — particularly where infection does not respond to antibiotic treatment — the implant may need to be removed to allow the infection to resolve fully. Re-implantation can be considered once healing is complete.
- **Implant Removal:** Whilst Medpor® implants are designed for permanent placement and the rate of removal is low, there are circumstances in which removal may become necessary. These include persistent infection that does not settle with antibiotics, implant malposition

causing an unsatisfactory result, or, rarely, patient preference for removal. Removal of a Medpor® implant is technically more demanding than removal of a silicone implant due to tissue ingrowth, and this procedure would be discussed fully with you if required.

- **Asymmetry or Dissatisfaction with the Aesthetic Result:** While the goal is to achieve a result that meets your expectations, perfect facial symmetry is not always possible. Some patients may feel the change is too subtle or too pronounced, or that there is a difference between the two sides. Final soft tissue settling takes several months, and the full result is not immediately apparent.
- **Implant Malposition:** Occasionally, an implant may shift slightly from its intended position during early healing, before tissue ingrowth has fully occurred. This may result in asymmetry or an unsatisfactory contour and may require a further procedure to reposition the implant.

Rare but Serious Risks

- **Permanent Altered Sensation:** In rare cases, numbness or altered sensation of the lower lip and chin may be long-lasting or permanent, due to injury to the mental nerve. Your surgeon will take every precaution to protect this nerve during the procedure and will discuss your individual risk with you.
- **Injury to Teeth or Roots:** The surgery is performed in close proximity to the roots of the lower front teeth. While every care is taken, damage to tooth roots is a rare risk.
- **Bone Resorption:** Long-term pressure from an implant can, rarely, cause thinning of the underlying bone. This is an uncommon complication with Medpor® due to its porous integration, but remains a recognised risk of jaw implant surgery in general.

Important: Numbness of the Lower Lip

The mental nerve runs along the inner surface of the lower jaw and supplies feeling to the lower lip, chin, and surrounding skin. During jaw implant surgery, this nerve may be stretched or temporarily displaced as the implant pocket is created. As a result, numbness or altered sensation of the lower lip is common in the weeks following surgery and should be expected. In the vast majority of patients, sensation returns fully as the nerve recovers over weeks to months. In rare cases, some degree of altered sensation may persist long-term. Mr McDonald will assess the position of your nerve prior to surgery and will discuss your individual risk at your consultation.

Consent

Consent for surgical treatment must be given freely and without pressure. Mr McDonald will ensure that you:

- Understand the nature of the proposed procedure
- Are aware of the likely benefits and relevant risks
- Have been informed of reasonable alternative treatments
- Have had the opportunity to ask questions

You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time before the procedure begins. If you have any doubts or concerns, please discuss them with Mr McDonald before signing the consent form.

If you would like a second opinion, your surgeon will support this and can provide relevant clinical information to assist you.

Preparing for Your Procedure

Before the Day

- Inform Mr McDonald of all medications you take, including blood-thinning medicines (e.g. warfarin, aspirin, clopidogrel, apixaban), as these may need to be adjusted. Do not stop any medication without medical advice.
- Inform Mr McDonald if you have any allergies, medical conditions, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Specific fasting instructions will be given to you in advance of your general anaesthetic. Follow these carefully.
- Arrange for a responsible adult to accompany you home. You must not drive, operate machinery, or make important decisions for 24 hours after a general anaesthetic.
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. Avoid wearing nail varnish or heavy makeup.
- If you smoke, you must stop completely for at least six weeks before surgery. Smoking significantly increases the risk of infection, poor wound healing, and implant-related complications.
- Maintain excellent oral hygiene before surgery. A healthy mouth reduces the risk of implant infection after the procedure.

On the Day

- Take any regular medications as advised by your surgeon (with a small sip of water if fasting).
- Brush your teeth carefully before attending.
- Bring your current medications.

Post-Operative Care Instructions

Following your operation, it is important to follow these instructions carefully to support healing, reduce the risk of infection, and protect the implant during early integration.

Immediately After the Procedure

Some oozing of blood from the internal wound is normal for the first 24–48 hours. Sit upright or semi-reclined rather than lying flat. Avoid rinsing, spitting forcefully, or sucking through a straw for the first 24 hours. Applying a cold compress (wrapped in a cloth) to the outside of your jaw and chin for the first 24 hours can help reduce swelling. Keep your head elevated, including for the first few nights.

Pain and Swelling

Take painkillers as prescribed or recommended by Mr McDonald. Ibuprofen can be taken three times a day and paracetamol four times a day. If you are still in pain, dihydrocodeine can be taken four times a day (constipation is a common side effect). Appropriate painkillers will be provided on discharge. Swelling typically peaks at 48–72 hours and then gradually subsides. Significant swelling around the jaw is expected and normal — it will improve steadily over the coming weeks.

Eating and Drinking

You must follow a soft or liquid diet for the first two to four weeks. Avoiding hard, crunchy, or chewy foods protects the implant while tissue ingrowth is establishing. Avoid hot food

and drinks for the first 24 hours. Keep well hydrated with cool or lukewarm fluids. Avoid alcohol for at least 48 hours, or for the duration of any antibiotic course.

Oral Hygiene

Maintaining excellent oral hygiene after surgery is particularly important to reduce the risk of implant infection. Continue to brush your other teeth as normal from the evening of the procedure, avoiding the surgical site initially. From 24 hours after surgery, gently rinse with warm salty water (one teaspoon of salt dissolved in a glass of warm water) after every meal and before bed for at least 5–7 days. If prescribed a chlorhexidine mouthwash, use it as directed and continue for the full recommended course.

Activity and Lifestyle

Rest for the remainder of the day following your procedure. Avoid strenuous physical activity, heavy lifting, and vigorous exercise for at least four to six weeks, as this can increase swelling and risk of complications. Avoid any direct contact or trauma to the jaw and chin area during early healing. Do not smoke for at least six weeks after surgery — smoking impairs tissue ingrowth and significantly increases the risk of infection and implant-related complications. Do not drive, use public transport alone, operate machinery, drink alcohol, or make important decisions for 24 hours after your general anaesthetic. Most patients feel well enough to return to desk-based work after one to two weeks.

When to Seek Help

Please contact the Duty Sister at Albyn Hospital (01224 595993) or seek medical attention if you experience any of the following:

Contact Us or Seek Urgent Help If You Have:

- ⚠ Heavy or persistent bleeding that does not stop with pressure after 40 minutes
- ⚠ Severe or rapidly worsening pain not controlled by prescribed analgesia
- ⚠ Signs of implant infection: increasing pain, swelling, or redness after day 3, a foul taste, discharge from the wound, or fever
- ⚠ Sudden or marked change in the contour or symmetry of your jaw or chin
- ⚠ Difficulty swallowing or breathing
- ⚠ Any other symptom that concerns you

Medications

You may be prescribed one or more of the following after your procedure:

- Analgesics (painkillers): Ibuprofen and/or paracetamol are usually sufficient. Take as directed. Do not exceed the recommended dose.
- Antibiotics: A course of antibiotics is routinely prescribed following jaw implant surgery to reduce the risk of infection around the implant. It is important to complete the full course, even if you feel well.

- Chlorhexidine mouthwash: Use as directed to help keep the surgical site clean and reduce the risk of infection. Continue for the full recommended duration.
- Dexamethasone (steroid): This may be given during the procedure to reduce post-operative swelling.

Always take medications as directed. If you have concerns about any medication, contact the clinic or your GP.

What to Expect During Recovery

Timeframe	What Is Normal
Day 1	Numbness from the local and general anaesthetic, mild to moderate swelling around the jaw and chin. Some oozing from the internal wound is normal. You may find eating and drinking uncomfortable initially.
Days 2–3	Swelling typically peaks during this period and may feel worse before it improves. Bruising may develop over the jaw, chin, and neck. Numbness of the lower lip and chin is common and expected at this stage.
Days 4–7	Swelling and discomfort gradually begin to improve. Eating soft foods becomes progressively easier. Dissolvable stitches inside the mouth begin to soften.
Weeks 2–3	The majority of visible swelling and bruising should have resolved. Dissolvable stitches fall out. You can gradually return to a more varied soft diet. Many patients are comfortable returning to work during this period.
Weeks 4–6	Most patients are able to return to light exercise. Sensation in the lower lip and chin continues to improve for most patients, though full recovery can take several months.
Months 3–12	The implant becomes fully integrated with the surrounding tissue. Any residual numbness continues to resolve. The final aesthetic result — with full soft tissue settling — is typically appreciated from around six months onwards.

Follow-Up

A follow-up appointment will be arranged at around six weeks following your procedure to review your healing, assess implant position, and monitor nerve recovery. Further review will be arranged at around three to six months to assess the final aesthetic result. If you do not receive an appointment automatically, please contact Albyn Hospital.

If you have any concerns between appointments — particularly regarding signs of infection — do not wait for your scheduled review. Contact the clinic or Albyn Hospital directly.

Alternatives to Surgery

In some situations there are alternatives to jaw implant surgery, and these will be discussed with you during your consultation. Options may include:

- Non-surgical treatments — such as dermal filler injections to the chin and along the jawline, which can provide a temporary improvement in definition and projection without surgery. Results typically last 12–18 months.

- Genioplasty (chin bone surgery) — in cases where improvement to the chin alone is required, repositioning of the chin bone may be an alternative or complementary approach. This is discussed in a separate information leaflet.
- No treatment — if your concerns are mild or you prefer not to proceed with surgery, careful observation with reassessment at a later date is always an option.

Your surgeon will advise you on whether any of these alternatives are suitable for your specific goals and anatomy.

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