

The Cheek

To help the floppy cheek:

- support it during speech and it will make the Bs and Ps sound better
- **short** periods of taping, eg, 10 minutes, using transparent tape (covered with make up if necessary), may be useful to help you remember different cheek positions
- stimulate the cheek by touching it:
 - use a make-up brush and use large strokes from mouth to ear
 - use of an ice-cube, in sweeping strokes, from mouth to ear
 - stimulate your cheek while applying moisturiser to your face

EATING AND DRINKING

- you must retain the ability to eat on both sides of the mouth, as one-sided eating brings problems later
- if you can't seal your mouth, pinch the corners of your lips together with your thumb and first finger and chew on both sides
- drink with the cup at the middle of your mouth

MOUTH HYGIENE

- clean your cheeks of food at the end of a meal using a finger or the blunt end of your toothbrush
- use a warm, salt water mouthwash. Try and hold the water in the affected cheek and swish it around your mouth without dribbling
- overall be very aware of mouth hygiene, teeth cleaning and dental checks

TASTE

Lack of taste on the affected side of your tongue may be a problem to you. Taste will return gradually but rarely returns to normal.

As your taste does return, it normally follows the pattern of sugar -> salt -> bitter -> sour. You need to use the taste buds and re-learn to recognise food flavours as recovery occurs.

If you require this leaflet in any other format, eg, large print, please telephone 01935 384590

If you have any questions or require further information or advice, please contact:

PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT
(between 8:30 am and 5 pm) 01935 384358

FACIAL PALSY

Physiotherapy Department

CARING FOR YOUR FACE

Look in the mirror and assess each part of your face objectively and note problem areas:

- forehead
- eye
- cheek
- mouth

What can you do to help?

You need to use your face to eat, drink, express your emotions and speak. It is important to look after your face and exercise in the correct way to ensure you get as much recovery as possible.

Forehead

- massage gently in an upward direction to help the mobility of the tissues
- a headband over the forehead can be used **for short periods only** to help you maintain the feel of the eyebrow position. However, if used for too long, it forces the eye open and may lead to more irritation of the eyeball
- clear tape can be used to hold the eyebrow up **for short periods only**, eg, 5-10 minutes, 3-4 times a day or as required.

Eye Care

- get into the habit of closing the eye with your finger
- apply eye drops to give artificial tears and keep the eye moist. Apply drops as prescribed by your GP. If the eye becomes sore, use the eye drops which contact lens wearers use. They are more expensive, but stronger
- protect the eye from drying by wearing glasses. Sunglasses can be used to help decrease eye irritation from light and are also useful when watching television
- draughts in your eye also cause unnecessary drying of the surface. An optician can help to fit a side rim to your glasses on the affected side
- at night you will need to close the eye artificially to reduce irritation. Follow the procedure below until you are 100% positive that your eye is back to normal:
 - squeeze a line of thick eye ointment along your lower lid to stick the lids together
 - place surgical tape across your eyelid down to the cheek to ensure the eye stays closed

There are a number of other procedures which can be used to protect the eye. Your Physiotherapist can discuss them with you if necessary.

NB: It is easier to prevent soreness in the eye than to treat it.

Blink

Blinking of the eye is one of the last things to recover and it can take up to a year to re-establish blink reflex.

Once you can move the eyelid towards closure, start to practice the fast movements of blink every day.

Bell's Phenomena

Once you can close your eye, you need to get rid of the habit of rolling the eyeball upwards.

Take a blank card and mark it with a cross. Hold the cross in front of you and train both eyes onto it.

Ask a friend to kneel in front of you. Gently close your eyelids and ask your friend to tell you the instant your eye starts to flip back. With constant practice you should start to recognise the movement yourself. Most people can learn that feeling in less than 30 minutes and once you can feel it you will be able to correct it.

Keep your eyes focused on the cross and gently close your lids.