

About your mandibular repositioning appliance

This leaflet explains more about your mandibular repositioning appliance (MRA), what it is for and how you should use it.

What is a mandibular repositioning appliance (MRA)?

An MRA is a dental appliance (pictured below), similar to a gum shield, that is used to treat snoring and mild to moderate sleep apnoea (interrupted breathing during sleep).



It is worn in your mouth when you are asleep. It works by holding the lower jaw forward and dragging the tongue forward to clear the airway during sleeping. This stops obstruction of the airway, which can reduce or eliminate sleep apnoea. It also increases the amount of oxygen getting into your body and usually reduces noise generation (snoring).

How does the appliance work?

The appliance operates as outlined above. It is initially set at a predetermined level – this may not be exactly right for you and you may need your appliance to be remade.

How will the appliance affect my mouth?

The appliance needs to be worn for as long as possible at night, ideally for five to six hours. If any major discomfort is experienced it must be removed and you must contact the dentist who made it for you. The main area of concern would be the jaw joint immediately in front of the ear which can become very painful. The muscles involved in clenching the teeth may ache at first but should settle within a few days.

Slight discomfort around the gum margins of the teeth and the edges of the appliance can be eliminated by careful adjustment – you can use a nail file or emery paper. This discomfort can happen from time to time as the gums do swell up if traumatised or inflamed due to inadequate cleaning and the presence of dental plaque.

When should I start wearing my appliance?

It will take time to get used to the appliance. Do **not** try to sleep with it immediately. Take time to get used to it for increasing periods when you are not thinking about it, such as when you are watching TV or reading.

Will the appliance affect my teeth?

With good oral care the appliance will not affect your teeth, but you must make sure that your teeth are carefully cleaned before the appliance is placed in your mouth. Any gum problem or tooth decay could be made worse by the presence of the appliance as the teeth and gums are covered at night and saliva cannot reach them.

The appliance is made of a soft material and should not have any effect on your ability to move your jaw. If your teeth ache after you have worn the appliance, it is likely you are grinding your teeth and this will be made worse by the presence of the device. If you cannot overcome this, you may decide not to wear the appliance any longer.

It is possible over a long period of time for the lower jaw position to change and sit forwards of its original position. If you notice any change in the way the teeth meet (the bite), stop wearing the appliance and contact the dentist who made it for you. Any concerns should be reported to the dentist who made it immediately – it may only involve discussion and reassurance.

How should I clean the appliance?

Periodic soaking in a special cleaner will prolong the appliance's life. A cleaner called Retainer Brite can be used daily. It's available to buy from Dentocare (telephone 0800 980 1517, www.dentocare.co.uk) and other leading retailers specialising in mouth care products.

You may also use an effervescent (fizzy) denture cleaner once a month. Soak the appliance for 20 minutes in cold water, rinse thoroughly and store it either dry or in plain water or if you prefer.

When will my appliance need to be replaced?

If used regularly, the appliance provided through the service at Guy's and St Thomas' should last around one year. After this time it would normally be hard, discoloured and less functional, and ideally need to be replaced.

To obtain a new appliance, you will need to ask your GP (**NOT** your dentist) to send us a letter requesting a replacement appliance. This is Trust policy as you have been discharged from our care to the care of your GP.

A follow-up appointment is not normally needed after the fitting of an appliance. However, if you have any problems please do not hesitate to contact the Restorative Department for an appointment (contact details can be found at the end of this leaflet).

Should I still visit my own dentist?

It is essential that you maintain a healthy mouth to minimise the chance of this appliance doing you any harm. Regular check-ups with a dentist must not be ignored. If a dentist provides a new filling or a crown, he/she can adjust the appliance at the same time to allow for the change in shape. Do not worry if a hole appears in the appliance as it is the mechanical integrity of the appliance which is important, not the suction effect of the appliance against the teeth.

What should I do if the appliance is not helping me?

If the appliance is not helping you, you should stop wearing it and report this to the consultant looking after your sleep disorder. If the appliance helps but does not totally eliminate the snoring or sleep apnoea, you should contact the dentist who made it for you and it may be possible to bring the jaw slightly further forward to improve its effect.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about mandibular repositioning appliance, please contact the Restorative Department on **020 7188 3496**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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