

PATIENT INFORMATION

Bell's Palsy

WHAT IS BELL'S PALSY?

Bell's palsy is a temporary weakness or lack of movement affecting one side of the face. Most people recover within 9 months.

The cause of bell's palsy is not completely understood however, evidence suggests that it may be caused by swelling around the nerve, caused by a virus.

Bell's palsy is rare in children, most children who are affected make a recovery without treatment.

What are the symptoms of bell's palsy

- Facial droop on one side that usually develops over days or hours
- Difficulty closing or opening the eye on the affected side
- Difficulty frowning or smiling
- Often speech is slurred
- Drooling due to lack of control of the mouth muscles
- Earache, sensitivity to sound
- Loss of taste on the affected side of the tongue

Bell's palsy only affects the face

WHEN TO SEE A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

Immediate visit to A&E if;

- **If your child complains of feeling weak or numb in other parts of their body**
- **If your child develops a very sudden facial droop within seconds, with or without speech difficulty**
CALL AN AMBULANCE. As this is not typical of bell's palsy

Treatment

Most people recover well without any treatment however, treatment can improve symptoms and help you recover more quickly.

Your child may have been given a course of steroids to take for ten days. These usually only work when they are started within the first 3 days of symptoms.

These steroids work by reducing inflammation on the affected nerve. Taking a short course of steroids is unlikely to cause any problems associated with taking long term steroids such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and thinning of the bones.

If your child is unable to open or close their eye properly there are things you can do to help, such as,

- **Wearing sunglasses during the day to protect the eye**
- **Using drops your doctor may have prescribed to keep the eye moist**
- **Your doctor may advise you to tape the eye closed at night while they sleep**
- **He or she may also suggest an eye-lubrication ointment or gel to use while they sleep**

What to do in the weeks following diagnosis

You may have been referred to a specialist if the doctor thinks this may help some of your child's symptoms such as an ophthalmologist or an ENT specialist.

Go back to see your GP if there are no signs of improvement after 3 weeks

Bell's palsy can make your child feel upset or anxious, speak to your GP if you are concerned about this.

WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU ARE CONCERNED

During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have questions or concerns.

MATRON

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

- Your own GP
- Return to A&E

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) – 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) – 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need
this leaflet in an alternative format**

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

Ormskirk & District General Hospital
Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ
Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN
Tel: (01704) 547471

FOR APPOINTMENTS

Telephone (01695) 656680
Email soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net

Please remember to complete the **attached Friends and Family Test**.

Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test* on-line by going to:
southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT

Thank you

Owner: Jennifer Warham

Ref: 22/10

Version: 1

Produced: August 2022

Review Date: August 2025