

Buccal Fat Reduction

Buccal (pronounced BUCK-ull) fat reduction surgery removes excess fat from the cheeks to produce a more contoured and refined appearance.

About buccal fat reduction

A face with some fullness looks healthy and youthful. Excessive fullness, however, disrupts the harmony of the features and produces a “chipmunk cheek” effect that makes many people self-conscious.

Buccal fat reduction addresses this problem by removing excess fat from the cheeks to produce a more delicate, chiseled appearance.

Effective as this procedure is, however, it should not be undertaken without some thought for the future.

- Most people’s faces begin to thin as they reach their 30s, so the fullness that concerns you may disappear on its own.
- If you choose to have buccal fat reduction performed before this natural slimming of the face occurs, you may find your face becoming too thin as you begin to age.

It is best to take a careful look at your genetics. Did your parents have overly plump faces when they were young? Did this plumpness persist once they reached their 30s and 40s? If so, you may have inherited their more rounded facial appearance. If not, having buccal fat reduction surgery while you are still young may leave you looking gaunt as you get older. This can be corrected but would require additional surgery.

Your consultation

During your consultation, your surgeon will take a complete medical history and inquire about any medications you are currently taking and whether you smoke. He will ask about your goals for the procedure, explain what you can expect and describe how the procedure will be performed.

You and your surgeon will also discuss the types of anaesthesia that can be used for the procedure and decide which is right for you.

Your operation: what to expect

Buccal fat reduction is most often performed as a day case using local anaesthesia coupled with sedation or a general anaesthetic.

After injecting a solution of Lidocaine, epinephrine and saline to numb the area and limit bleeding, your surgeon will make a small (2-4 cm long) incision between your cheek and gums near your second molar from the back. He will then press on the outside of your cheek to make the buccal fat protrude through the incision so he can tease it out a little at a time with surgical tweezers. Once an adequate amount has been removed he will close the incision, most often with dissolvable sutures.

After your surgery

After your surgery you will need to sleep on two pillows to keep your head elevated for at least two weeks and take it easy for at least three.

During your recovery period there are several things you should expect:

- You will have some discomfort, but this should be controlled by pain medication that will be prescribed for you. Should you experience excessive pain, redness or any other symptoms that seem abnormal you should contact your surgeon immediately. These symptoms could be signs of infection.
- Bruising and swelling are normal after surgery and will subside in a matter of days or weeks. In most instances however, bruising and swelling is very limited from the beginning.
- Because of the incision inside your mouth you may have to eat a restricted diet for a while. Your surgeon will tell you what foods you should avoid. You will also be instructed to rinse your mouth several times a day with an antibacterial mouthwash.

- As your sutures are dissolvable, it will not be necessary to have them removed. Please resist the temptation to chew on the stitches you feel inside your cheek.
- At your first follow-up meeting, usually a week after surgery, your surgeon will assess the healing of the wounds inside your mouth. Even though you should be feeling better by this time it is important to continue to take it easy, not bend over and not lift heavy objects. Contact sports should be avoided for at least six to eight weeks.
- Your swelling will continue to subside for several weeks and as it does, your new, more defined facial structure will be revealed.
- During this time you may notice a change in your smile or odd sensations like tingling, pulling, burning, hollowness, cold or sudden sharp pain. These feelings, which are related to the healing of the nerve branches in the area of the operation, usually subside within the first few weeks.
- Numbness is also possible and, while it usually settles within the first few weeks, it may occasionally become a permanent issue. Other possible complications of buccal fat reduction include asymmetry, hematoma, seroma and infraorbital nerve and facial nerve buccal branch dysfunction.

More Information

Naturally, there will be many questions you will want to ask before making any decisions about undergoing surgery. Also you will wish to meet your Surgeon - having trust and confidence in one's Surgeon is very important.

Surgery is unique to every patient and a detailed discussion and assessment between you and your Consulting Surgeon is essential in enabling you to make a decision based on correct personal information and advice.

Arranging a medical consultation does not obligate you to anything other than attending the appointment. There is no obligation to proceed with treatment. This is entirely a matter for your decision, after the surgeon has decided on the feasibility and accepted you as suitable.

If you would like to know more information we will be happy to answer any queries either by email, letter or telephone, so please do not hesitate to get in touch.