

Facial palsy

Information and advice

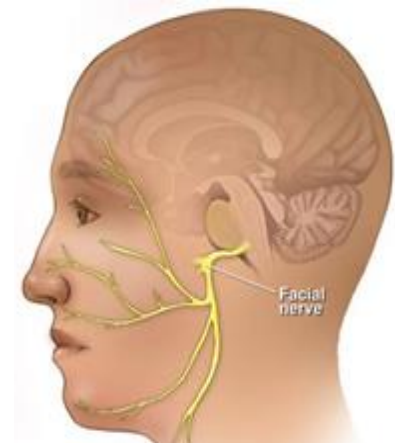
Facial palsy happens when the nerves which help control face movement, stop working properly. This means your facial muscles become weak, or completely paralysed. A side of your face may start to droop or twitch.

If you're coping with a facial paralysis, your doctor may do tests to find out the cause.

Causes of facial palsy

Facial palsy can be caused by many different things, such as:

- Skull fracture
- Stroke
- Viral infection (like Bell's Palsy)
- Ramsay Hunt syndrome, due to shingles which may cause facial weakness, blisters in your ears and on the roof of your mouth
- Tumour on your hearing nerve (acoustic neuroma), or the surgery to remove it
- Growths on your saliva glands (Parotid gland)



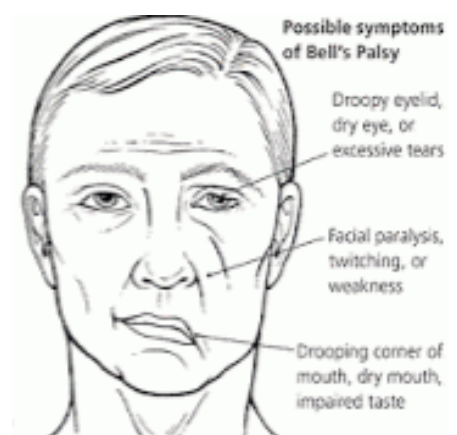
Bell's palsy

Bell's Palsy is a type of facial palsy, thought to be caused by a viral infection.

It's usually a temporary paralysis on one side of your face, which affects your ability to smile, eat and close your eye.

It usually develops quickly over a few days and may get worse for up to a week

Approximately 80% of people with Bell's Palsy will see signs of improvement within 3 weeks of being diagnosed, and many make a recovery within 2 - 3 months.



How can you manage your facial palsy?

Medications

Your GP may prescribe you with medication to help you manage your facial palsy, such as:

- Oral steroids (like prednisolone) may help to reduce inflammation and decrease the likelihood of damage to nerve bundles
- Antiviral medication (such as Acyclovir) if you have Ramsay Hunt syndrome

Eye Care

- If you have problems closing your eyes (blinking, sleeping) your doctor may prescribe you with eye drops or ointment to stop your eyes from getting too dry
- You can use micropore tape to keep your eyes closed if you need help sleeping
- Wraparound sunglasses or eyepatches can protect your eyes from sunlight, wind and dust while you're outside

Mouth Care

- Take extra care when eating and cleaning. Chewing food and brushing your teeth may be more challenging on the affected side of your face

Rest

- It's important to rest, as stress may affect your recovery

Exercise

Gentle facial massage can help relax muscles on our affected side.

- To do this, use the pads of your fingers to slowly massage your brow, temples, cheek, chin and neck
- Don't over exercise your facial muscles too much, as forceful movements may affect your recovery

If you need help or advice, please speak to your GP. They may recommend a referral to our physiotherapy team. Visit facialpalsy.org.uk for more information and support.

How to contact us

If you need to contact us or require further information...

East Berkshire: Windsor, Maidenhead, Slough, Ascot, Bracknell

Call: 0300 365 5678

Email: Mskphysioadmin@berkshire.nhs.uk

West Berkshire: Wokingham, Newbury, Reading

Call: 0118 955 0415

Email: admin.rdgphysio@berkshire.nhs.uk

