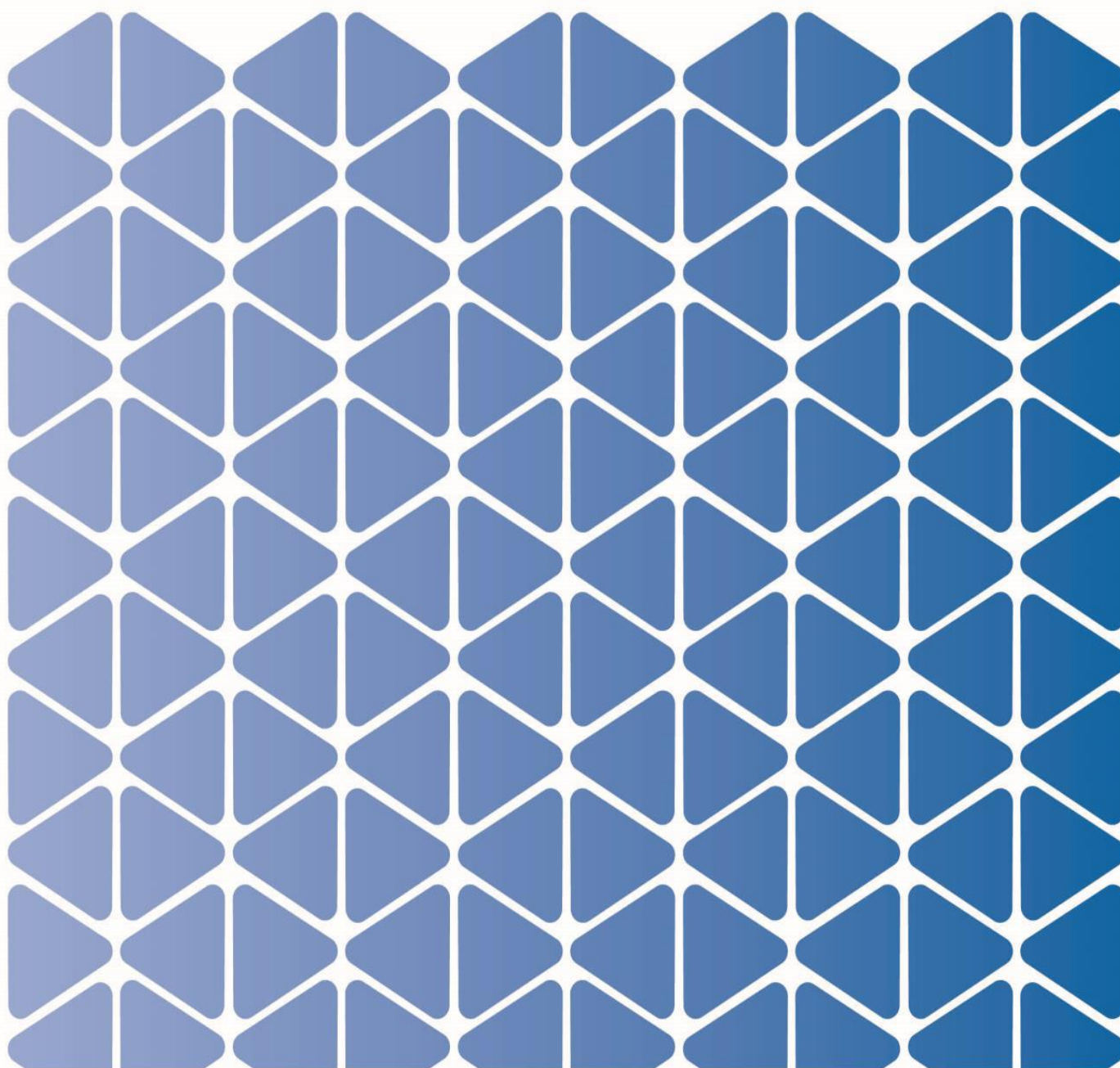


PATIENT INFORMATION**FACIAL EXERCISES AND
MASSAGE ROUTINE**

Supporting Recovery for Patients with Facial Weakness or Facial Palsy

This leaflet provides guidance on facial exercises and massage techniques to help improve movement, comfort, and symmetry following facial weakness or palsy.

Facial Exercises and Massage Routine

- ⚠ If you're worried about your recovery after 2–3 months, ask your GP for a referral to physiotherapy or speech and language therapy.
- ⚠ Movement exercises should be gentle and careful, as forcing weak muscles can cause tightness and involuntary movements.
- ⚠ Exercises should only begin once improvement starts.
- ⚠ Use your fingertips with firm but gentle circular pressure (1–2 minutes per muscle group), ideally lying down. Start at the scalp, then brow, and work downwards.

Facial Massage

Preparation:

- Ensure your hands and face are clean before starting.
- Apply a suitable moisturizer to your hands and then to the forehead, nose, cheeks, and jawline. Avoid the eye area.

Massage Techniques:

- Using **three fingers**, perform circular massage movements:
 - On the temples
 - Above the eyebrows
 - In the middle of the forehead
- Massage vertically (zigzag pattern) along the forehead using both hands in opposite directions.
- Use circular motions to massage the cheeks and along the jawline, extending toward the chin.
- Using **two fingers**, gently massage in circular motions around the chin.



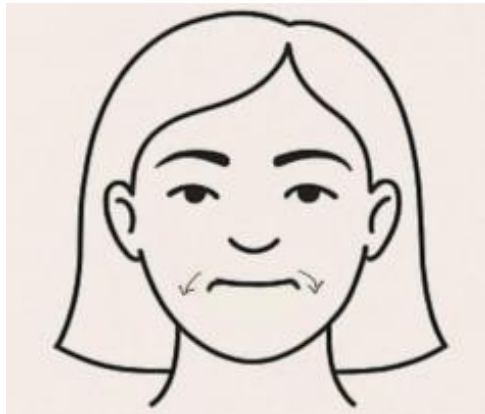
Facial Movement Exercises

- Frown by bringing your eyebrows together toward the midline.
- Raise your eyebrows upward.
- Simulate the act of smelling freshly baked bread – sniff deeply through the nose.



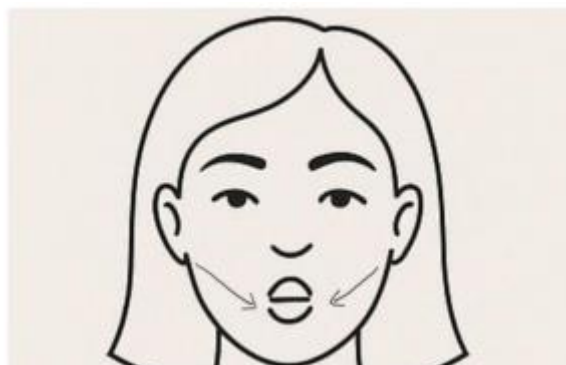
- Practice tiny smiles:
 - On one side of the lips
 - On the other side
 - On both sides together

- Create a sad expression using your lips.
- Finish with a spontaneous, natural smile.



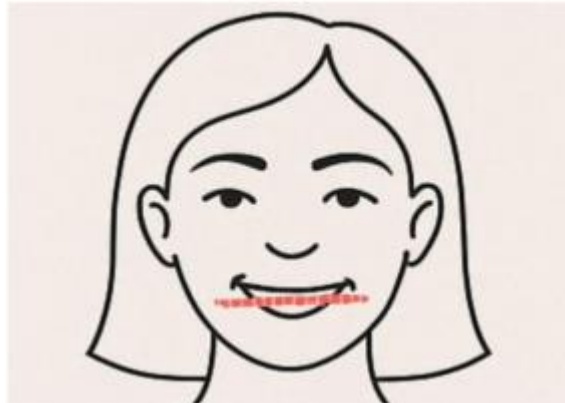
Facial Symmetry Exercises

- Gently pinch the lower lip toward the midline, then do the same with the upper lip.
- Sweep your fingers from the lower tip of the earlobe toward the angle of the mouth on both sides of the face.
 - Repeat this motion with the mouth open.
- Purse your lips tightly.
- Blow gently into a paper tissue to practice controlled breath and muscle engagement.



Lip Strengthening Exercises

- Hold a pencil or similar object between your teeth. Open and close your lips while maintaining grip.



Practice articulation of the following sounds to strengthen lip and facial muscles:

- *Shushing sounds:*
Sho, Shu, She
- *Consonant-vowel sounds:*
Fa, Fa, Fo, Fo, Fe, Fe
Vo, Vo, Va, Va, Ve, Ve
Ru, Ru, Raa, Raa, Roo, Roo, Ree, Ree
Mmm, Mmm, Ma, Ma, Mo, Mo, Me, Me
Pha, Pha, Pho, Pho, P, P
Ba, Ba, Bo, Bo, B, Be
- Hold a small amount of air (or water) in your mouth and shift it side to side to promote lip and cheek coordination.

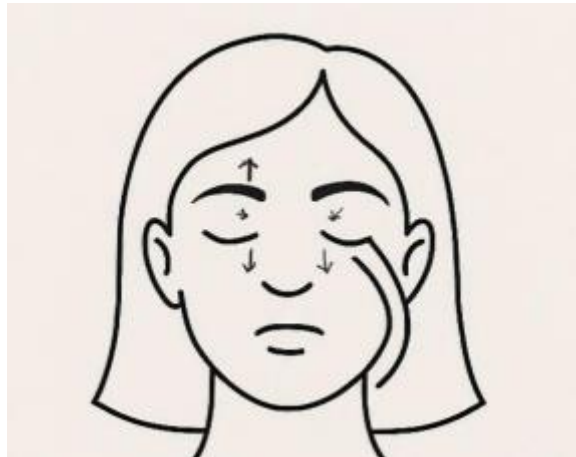
Eyelid Exercises

Lid Stretch:

- Look downward.
- Apply gentle pressure with one index finger on the upper eyelid.
- With the other index finger, raise the eyebrow.
- Repeat three times daily.

Manual Blink:

- Look downward.
- Gently press the upper eyelid with an index finger to encourage blinking.
- Can be repeated at any time of the day.



Supportive Tapping Technique

- Use a small piece of tape or medical plaster on the cheeks to provide sensory feedback and gentle support, this can be helpful during eating and drinking.

General Advice:

- Extra eye moisture is needed day and night; gels and ointments last longer than artificial tears but can blur vision, so they're best used at bedtime.
- Protect your eyes by taking breaks when reading or using screens, avoiding smoke, dust, wind, or strong airflows, wearing wraparound glasses in sun or wind, and covering your eye when showering or washing hair.

References and useful links:

- <https://www.uhs.nhs.uk/departments/brain-spine-and-nerves/wessex-neurological-centre/neurology/the-wessex-facial-nerve-centre/facial-exercise-videos>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=og33hoO-8AQ>
- <https://www.facialpalsy.org.uk/support/treatments-therapies/facial-rehabilitation/>
- <https://www.facialpalsy.org.uk/causesanddiagnoses/bells-palsy/>

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.