

# Looking After Your Child's Airway – What's Next?

Your child has recently undergone ENT surgery so they can breathe how we were intended to breathe – through our nose. Sometimes, surgery alone is not enough to correct breathing patterns. This can be because mouth breathing has become habitual or because the muscles needed to support proper nose breathing are underdeveloped. Therefore, it is important after ENT surgery to have your child's breathing habits evaluated by a qualified professional. Continuing to breathe through our mouth after ENT surgery impacts:

1. Overall health
2. Facial development and growth
3. Behavioural and emotional development

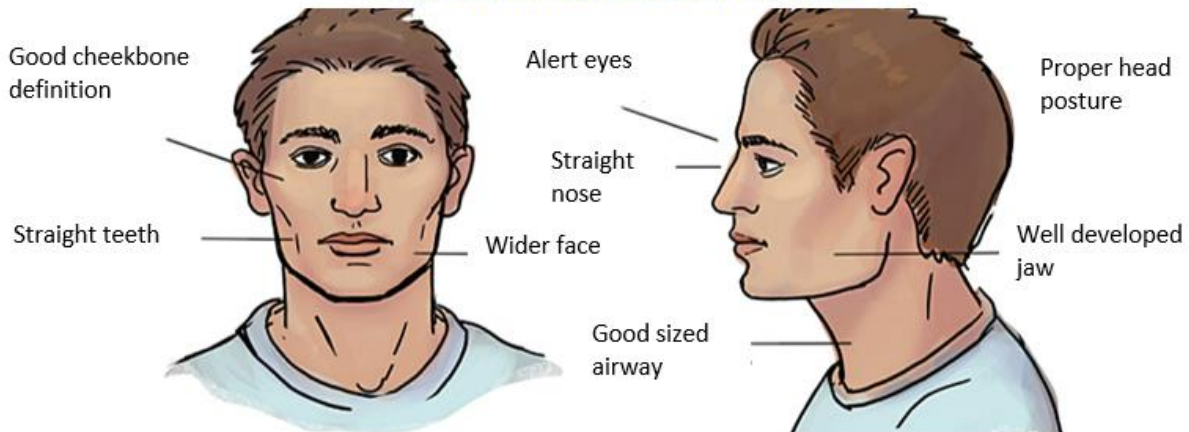
## What do we look for?

There are four major things we look for after ENT surgery:

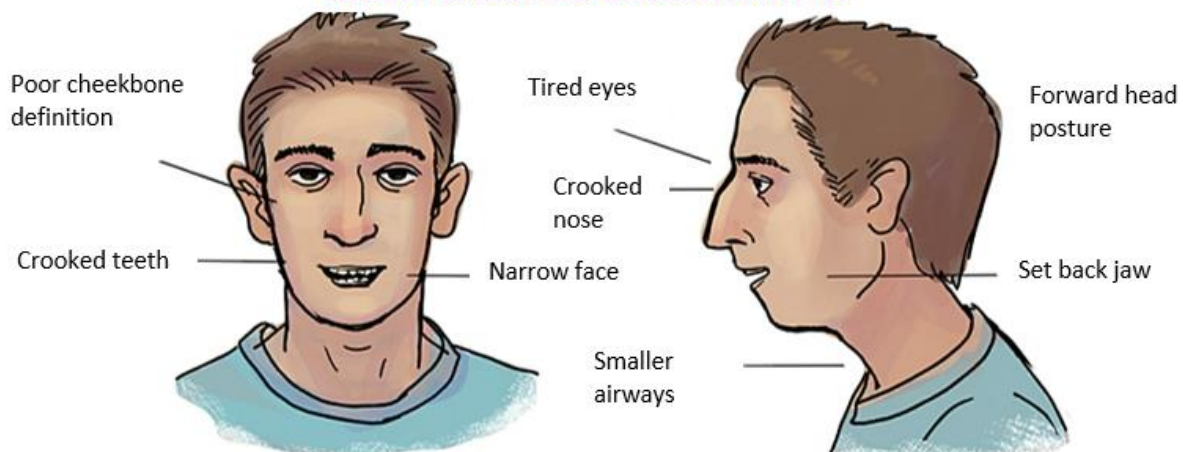
1. Is your child breathing through their nose at rest?
2. Are your child's lips closed at rest?
3. Is your child's tongue sucked up onto the top of their mouth at rest?
4. Does your child swallow without using the muscles of the face?

These four things are vital in the growth and development of children's jaws and face. If one or more elements are missing, it alters the way the upper and lower jaws grow. The most obvious impact is how the face looks – mouth breathing causes the face to grow longer instead of wider resulting in crowded teeth and less aesthetic facial profiles. More importantly, it has a huge impact on the emotional and physical development of children – from emotional regulation and attention span to chronic disease and sleep apnoea risk as adults.

### NOSE BREATHING GROWTH PATTERN



### MOUTH BREATHING GROWTH PATTERN



# Who can assess oral function?

Oral function and breathing habits can be assessed by a range of different practitioners who are skilled at oral myology and the development of the face and jaws. At We Make Smiles, post-surgery assessments are performed by our dentist, Dr Lani Guy.

Dr Lani will examine the growth of your child's jaws and face up until the time of their surgery to see how this has impacted the size of the jaws and the position of their teeth. She will then examine the four factors listed overleaf – nose breathing, lip seal, tongue posture and swallowing pattern – so you can understand how these will likely impact future growth and development of the jaws and face.



## How is oral function corrected?

For some children, surgery is enough to correct oral function. However, in some cases dysfunctional habits persist post-surgery or surgery was performed at an age when your child's jaw and face growth was already affected. In these cases, we need to put growth and development back on track and reverse any negative changes that have occurred to jaw growth. We do this with oral myology and, in severe cases, orthodontics.

Oral myology is a fancy word for customized and targeted exercises which retrain the way we use the muscles of our face and jaws including how we breathe. You can expect an initial intensive 8-week program focusing on correcting your child's:


1. Breathing
2. Lip seal
3. Tongue posture
4. Swallowing pattern




These building blocks set your child up for healthy habits for life. Nonetheless, some children will require additional treatment to correct negative jaw growth that occurred prior to their surgery which can prevent them from achieving these four goals or has had a negative aesthetic impact on their facial profile. This is more likely to be the case for children who had their ENT surgery at an older age after many years of dysfunctional oral habits. There are several treatment options available including myofunctional orthodontics immediately following their intensive oral myology program or traditional orthodontics when your child reaches their early teenage years. Like any form of treatment, compliance is key to getting the outcomes you seek. Dr Lani is great with children; having a psychology degree and young children of her own who have completed this treatment.

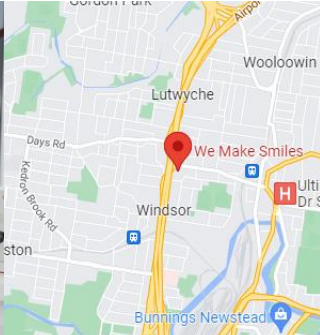
## Use the QR Code to book your free post-surgery assessment now

Scan the QR code to book your free post-surgery assessment of your child's oral function with We Make Smiles.



Scan me!





**we make smiles**

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