

NYCOMS NEWS

The New York Center for Orthognathic and Maxillofacial Surgery

Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer 2001

Surgeons

Stephen A. Sachs, DDS
*Diplomate, American Board of Oral
and Maxillofacial Surgery*

Michael H. Schwartz, DDS
*Diplomate, American Board of Oral
and Maxillofacial Surgery*

Stephanie J. Drew, DMD
*Diplomate, American Board of Oral
and Maxillofacial Surgery*

Staff

Pamela J. Ford
Administrator In Charge

Kelly Tyson-Morgano, MPA
Special Project Director

Dana-Jeanne Downer
Karen Zacharevitz
Financial Administrators

Sandra Parker
Surgical Coordinator

Karen Sachs
Patient Representative

Ruth Hand
Kerry Wichart
Judith Esposito
Colleen Rooney
Christine Harty
Reception

Jennifer DePace
Carol Stolz
Surgical Assistants

What is Orthognathic and Maxillofacial Surgery?

Many patients ask just that. Indeed, it is a mouthful. Simply put, our doctors perform a very specialized form of corrective jaw surgery, maxillofacial surgery. This surgical discipline involves building or correcting congenital (present at birth), developmental (evident by abnormal growth), and acquired (from injury, surgery, or atrophy) defects in the mouth, jaw or face. This can range from the removal of an infected or impacted tooth, to the placement of a dental implant, to the reconstruction of facial deformities resulting from birth defects, growth abnormalities, traumatic injuries or surgical defects. These conditions are the root of many problems including facial pain, the inability to pronounce words correctly or chew food properly (poor mastication) which can lead to digestive problems. In young children, when the defect is severe, it could also cause severe psychological problems.

Drs. Sachs, Schwartz, and Drew each do these procedures and have a sub-specialty as well. Dr. Sachs serves on several cleft teams in the region and heads the cleft palate division at St. Charles Hospital and Rehabilitation Center. He cares for many children and adults with cleft palate related disorders. Dr. Schwartz often focuses on patients with pathology of the temporomandibular joint requiring surgery. He also spends a significant amount of time with the orthognathic and maxillofacial surgery residents at Nassau County Medical Center. Dr. Drew deals with patients requiring Distraction Osteosynthesis, a very new and exciting maxillofacial procedure. She is also on the Executive Board of the Queens-Long Island Dental Study Club.

Orthognathic surgery is a term derived from the roots "ortho" meaning straight or balanced and "gnathos" meaning jaw. It involves surgically moving components of the face to achieve good balance, function, and aesthetics. Simply put, our surgical specialty involves rebuilding the mouth, face, and jaws in order to return patients to good oral health, facial function, and happy smiles.

A WORD FROM THE DOCTORS...

What exciting times we live in today! Technology has made the world a safer place for patients. It has also made the world "smaller" for the doctors seeking information to help their patients receive the most comprehensive care. With a click of the mouse, we can travel halfway around the world to speak with our friends, or see our colleagues in Europe or Asia operate. We can share information and teach through this powerful venue.

At NYCOMS, we have made every effort possible to keep up with the fast pace of changing technology. This has been accomplished through continuing education, constantly monitoring our patients' outcomes, and listening carefully to our patients' needs and ideas.

Currently, we have the ability to use 3-dimensional CT Scan technology to reconstruct the shape of the jaw and navigate to safety in the operating room. We can use magnetic resonance techniques to see into the temporomandibular joint and help plan a safe and accurate surgery. Surgical equipment used today is smaller and more accurate along with the advent of safer medications used in anesthesia. Patients are recovering faster and returning to normal, healthy lives.

In the future lies techniques of genetic growth of the proteins necessary to help bone heal faster, possibly cure certain cancers, and help prevent diseases of the jaws that effect the dentition and bones. Oh, what an exciting time indeed!

-Stephanie J. Drew, DMD

Staff News

Jennifer DePace, Surgical Assistant, is currently studying to take the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Anesthesia Assistants Program exam. This is a test on the surgical and sterilization techniques of the use of anesthesia in the office. On a personal note, Jennifer has recently become engaged and is planning a wedding for March 2002.

We are pleased to announce that we have **two** new additions to the NYCOMS team this year. **Dr. Stephanie Drew** and her husband Robert Gingher welcomed their second child, Maxwell Robert, on February 9th, 2001. **Kelly Morgano** and husband Frank welcomed their second child, Kylie Thea, on April 16th, 2001.

For further information on our office, procedures, staff, and surgeons, please visit our website at www.nycoms.com.

Upcoming NYCOMS Events

Dr. Stephanie Drew to lecture at Suffolk County Dental Study Club Forum 2001

Dr. Drew will speak on Distraction Osteogenesis on Sunday, September 9, 2001. This lecture will review the historical and current concepts in the use of distraction osteogenesis for the facial bones. She will demonstrate the biology of distraction osteogenesis, as well as display how this technique may be added to the dentist's supply of surgical techniques to help patients receive excellent results.

Spring/Summer 2001 Round Tables

If you are a patient who is planning to have surgery this summer or fall, please let the front desk know if you are interested in attending one of the Spring/Summer Round Table Discussions. This is a pre-surgical discussion with our patients and those involved in their surgery, such as an anesthesiologist, nurses on the recovery floor, and a nutritionist. Please ask Sandra Parker, the surgical coordinator, or Pamela Ford, the office manager, for more information. The next Round Table discussion will be held on **June 4th**. Patients with upcoming surgery dates will be notified with invitations.

\$\$ The Financial Corner \$\$

Dana –Jeanne Downer
Karen Zacharevitz
Financial Administrators

The financial aspect of the healthcare world is never easy to understand. There are always exclusions, pre-existing conditions that are not covered, deductibles to meet, fine print, and so on. The best way to face the challenge of understanding your insurance coverage is to read through your plan carefully and speak to a representative at your insurance company or place of business. They are there to help you understand what is and what is not covered, as well as the protocol necessary to obtain approval for certain surgical procedures.

At The New York Center for Orthognathic and Maxillofacial Surgery (NYCOMS), we try to be more than just the doctor's office getting you reimbursed for services rendered. We are your liaison to you insurance carrier. We fight for the patient's right to have medical care that is needed, covered by your health insurance.

Help us to help you by educating yourself about your insurance plan. Find out what it covers, what is required to obtain approval for surgery, and their methods of reimbursing patients. Often, it is not covered 100%, so the patient is responsible for some of the fee. Please call the office at any time to speak with Dana or Karen, or email them when visiting our website at www.nycoms.com.

REMEMBER:

The insurance company works for **YOU**, the patient, and ***not*** the doctors who are taking care of you. Know your rights and responsibilities by carefully reviewing your policy. We are here to help and guide you, but protect yourself by staying aware of any changes and updates in your insurance policy.

Financial Department Email Addresses:

Dana Downer:
ddowner@nycoms.com

Karen Zacharevitz:
kzacharevitz@nycoms.com

Office Locations and Phone Numbers

Western Nassau:	2001 Marcus Avenue, Suite N-10 Lake Success, New York 11042	Telephone (516) 775-1818 Facsimile (516) 775-0892
Suffolk County:	474 Montauk Highway West Islip, New York 11795	Telephone (631) 376-1560 Facsimile (631) 376-1561
New York City:	532 Park Avenue New York, New York 10021	Telephone (516) 775-1818 Facsimile (516) 775-0892

Email us by visiting our website at www.nycoms.com.

FROM OUR PATIENTS' POINT OF VIEW:

Topic: How I decided to have corrective jaw surgery

By: Rachel Freidus

Although hesitant at first, my decision to undergo orthognathic surgery was the best decision I have ever made. This decision is one that has changed my life and will continue to do so in many positive ways. By my junior year of high school, it became apparent to me and to my dentist that my bite was not correct. At the time, however, my underbite and crossbite did not affect my physical appearance, and I had not yet had any problem chewing food. When my parents suggested, on numerous occasions, that I undergo surgery to correct this, my reaction was the same each time. I let them know that I would never consider having surgery on my jaw, and that being wired shut for eight weeks was not an option. I couldn't imagine not eating or talking for eight whole weeks. Because my problem had not yet affected me, I decided to forget about it.

As time passed, the problem worsened. Chewing became more difficult, and I developed pain and cracking in my jaw. My physical appearance began to change as well. My face became longer and asymmetrical to the right. Despite all of the problems, I still would not consider having surgery. Luckily, during the first week of my sophomore year at college, I met another student who had already experienced orthognathic surgery. He provided me with every detail of his pre- and post-surgical experience, and informed me that being wired shut is not always necessary. His mouth had been secured through the use of rubber bands, with the aid of tiny plates and screw, allowing him to speak with ease, and "eat" blended food after a short period of healing. After hearing this important piece of information, my decision had been made.

While the idea of having surgery was frightening at first, I put my mind at ease by joining an online support group. Through this support group, individuals from around the world who were experiencing (or had experienced) what I would be going through, would ask and answer each other's questions and discuss the whole procedure. As a result of this website (<http://clubs.com/clubs/orthognathicsurgerysupport?s>), I knew almost everything I needed to know in order to prepare myself mentally and physically for the surgery on June 20th, 2000. My wonderful surgeons, Drs. Sachs and Schwartz, answered the multitude of questions I had during the pre-op meeting in their office.

Surprisingly, as the day approached, I became increasingly excited about undergoing surgery and could not wait to see the results. I trusted my doctors and knew there was nothing to worry about. Today I am six months post-op, and I cannot begin to describe how happy I am with the results. I can chew easily and without pain, and I could not be happier with my new appearance. To this day I am still confused as to how my miracle-worker surgeons changed my facial structure without causing me any pain. What I am sure about, however, is that having this surgery has changed my life. Like my friend who helped me make my decision, I strongly recommend this procedure. I hope that sharing my experience will help others make the same decision that I made.

If you are interested in submitting an essay about your experience for our newsletter, please send it to our office:
2001 Marcus Avenue, Suite N-10, Lake Success, NY 11042, and ATTENTION: Kelly Morgano
(All entries must be received no later than Monday, July 30th, 2001)

The topic for our next issue is: **How having corrective jaw surgery affected my life.**

NYCOMS EMAIL CHAT ROOM

We are in the process of setting up a "chat room" on the internet for patients who are interested in having jaw surgery. This will allow pre-surgical candidates to communicate with our post-surgical patients. We anticipate this site to be up and running this spring. If you are interested in participating, please email Kelly Morgano at ktmorgano@nycoms.com, with your email address and date of your surgery.

