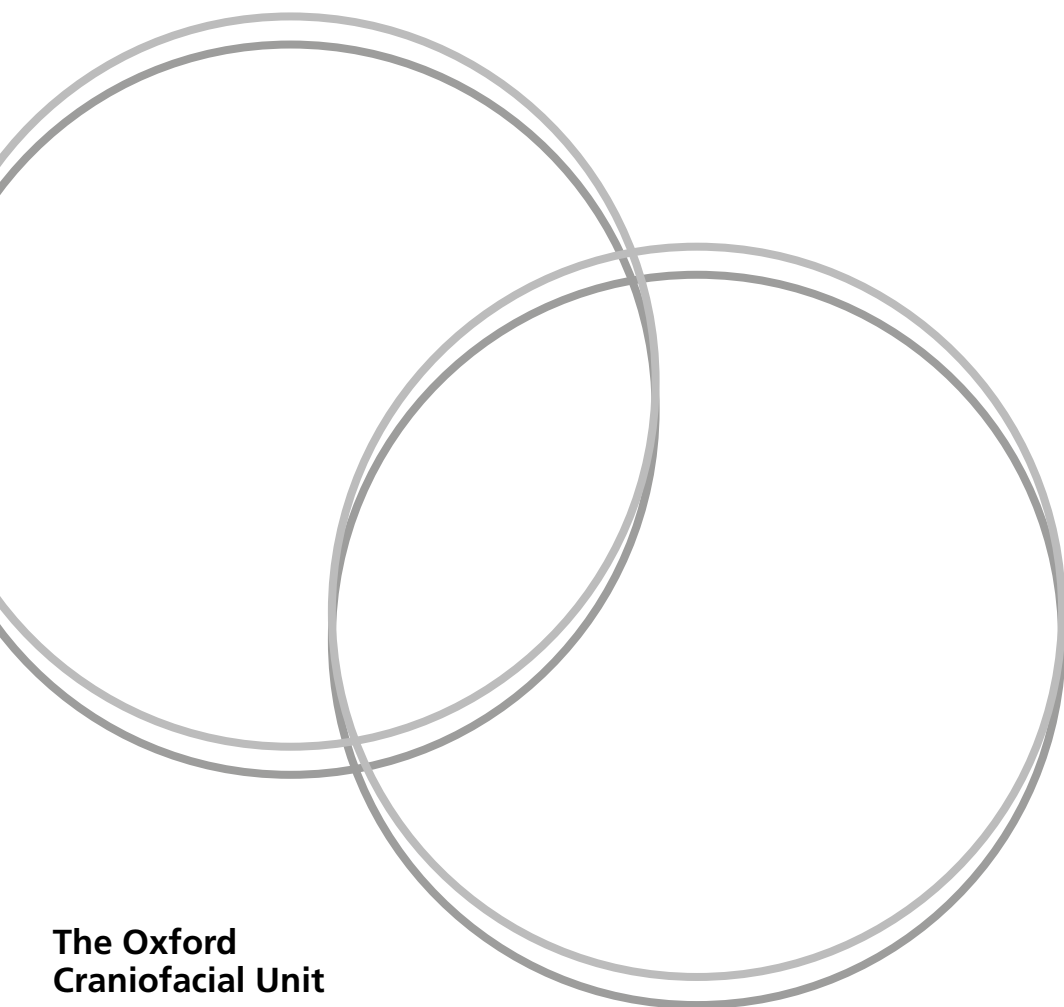


# Questions and Staring

**Guide for children and young people**



**The Oxford  
Craniofacial Unit**

## Dealing with questions

People often ask questions about things they've not seen before because they are curious – they are not usually trying to upset you. We are all curious about what we see around us! Having a plan ready will make you feel more confident and able to cope if someone does ask you a question.

Below are some ideas that may help you deal with the questions. You might like to practice some with a friend or someone in your family. This will help you test out which feel best for you, and you might decide to say or do different things in different situations. Practicing will also help you feel and act confidently. This will help the other person feel more relaxed too, and realise that having a craniofacial condition is 'no big deal'. Then you can get on with the important stuff of getting to know them!

### **Try reassuring them that having a craniofacial condition isn't a big problem:**

*"It's just the way my head is, it's ok, it doesn't hurt."*

*"You've noticed my scar –  
I had an operation, but I'm fine now."*

### **Try explaining to them what it is:**

*"I had a problem that meant my head didn't grow properly when I was a baby. I had to have an operation but it's fine now."*

### **Try changing the subject:**

*"It's the way my head is.  
Did you watch the match last night?"*

*"I had an operation when I was a baby.  
Have you ever had an operation?"*

*"I had an operation when I was a baby,  
but I can still play \*football. Do you play \*football?"  
(\*or ballet, swimming, etc.)*

## Coping with staring

For the same reason that people ask questions, they may also stare. Sometimes we all get caught out staring! It might be useful for you to think of staring as a question that someone wants to ask but doesn't know how. They are probably staring because they have never seen someone with a craniofacial condition before.

Just like when people ask questions, having a plan ready can really help.

### **It may be that you want to ignore them. In this case:**

- Walk away
- Turn your body away
- Look away

You might want to let them know that you have seen them staring, and that you want them to stop. So try:

- *Looking at them and smiling or nodding*

or saying

- *"I'd prefer it if you didn't stare at me."*

It might be that this person looks friendly and you want to talk to them. Try answering that 'unasked question' about your craniofacial condition and start a chat. For example:

- *"Have you not seen anyone with a scar like this before?"*
- *"My head is different; it's cool to be different, what's your different thing?"*

## Further information

**You may find the following websites helpful:**

**[www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk)**

**[www.headlines.org.uk](http://www.headlines.org.uk)**

**Dr Jenny Cropper, Dr Samuel White and Dr Rosanna**

**Samuel** are the Clinical Psychologists with the Craniofacial Unit.

Psychologists are part of the team to make sure you are feeling happy and confident in all the different parts of your life. They are happy to help with any worries; you can see them when you have a clinic appointment, or make a separate time to talk by calling the Craniofacial Unit office.

## How to contact us

### **The Craniofacial Unit**

Level LG1

West Wing

John Radcliffe Hospital

Oxford OX3 9DU

Tel: **01865 231085**

**<https://www.ouh.nhs.uk/craniofacial/>**







## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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