

Bell's Palsy

What it is: Bell's palsy is paralysis or weakness of the muscles on one side of the face. This can happen when a nerve in your face becomes irritated. Bell's palsy is not caused by a stroke. The cause of the nerve irritation is unknown but some experts think it may be from a virus. Because of this, doctors sometimes prescribe antiviral medicine to treat it. You may also get medicine to reduce swelling.

- **Symptoms associated with Bell's Palsy:** Often people with Bell's palsy have a droop on one side of the mouth and have trouble completely shutting the eye on the same side. Bell's palsy can also interfere with the sense of taste. Bell's palsy usually gets better on its own in a few weeks or months.

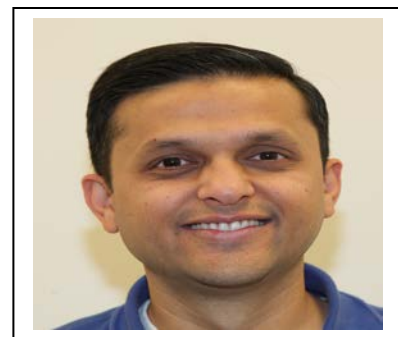
Management

- Use artificial tears or ointment if your eyes are too dry. Bell's palsy can make your lower eyelid droop, causing a dry eye.
- If you cannot completely close your eye, consider using an eye patch while you sleep.
- Help yourself blink by using your finger to close and open your eyelid.

This may help keep your eye moist.

- Wear glasses or goggles to keep dust and dirt out of your eye.
- As feeling comes back to your face, massage your forehead, cheeks and eyelids.
- Practice facial expressions to help activate the muscles of your face, such as smiling, frowning, furrowing your brow and wrinkling your nose in front of a mirror.
- Practice your oral motor exercises by sucking/blowing through a straw, chewing gum and blowing bubbles.

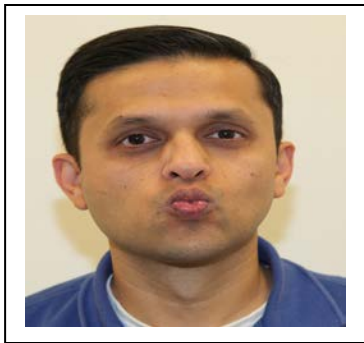
Exercises



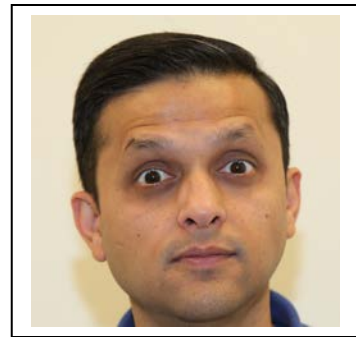
- Open and close mouth as you would with smiling. Perform 30 times. 4x / day

Bell's Palsy Facial Droop

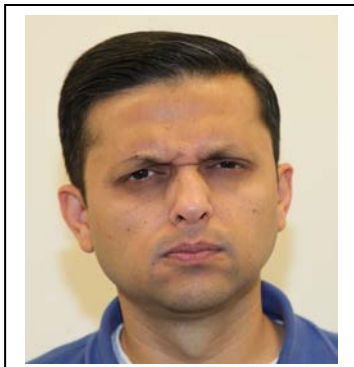
Exercises



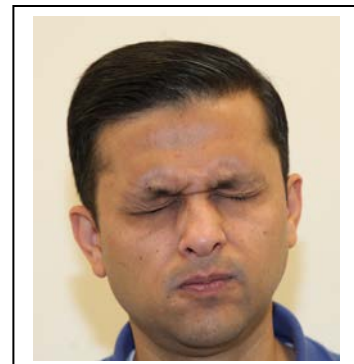
- Slowly pucker mouth then relax. Perform 30 times. 4x / day



- Slowly open eyes wide open and lift eyebrows. Perform 30 times. 4x / day



- Slowly frown then relax. Perform 30 times. 4x / day



- Slowly close eyes tightly and relax. Perform 30 times. 4x / day