

Immediate Post-Operative Instructions for Corrective Jaw Surgery

After you have undergone a surgical procedure to correct the position of your upper jaw, lower jaw, or both, attention must be given to several aspects of postoperative care in order to help make the recovery as quick and easy as possible. Since surgery produces soreness in the muscles and bones of the jaw as well as the lips, nose and other areas of the face, some difficulty is encountered in performing such tasks as eating, drinking and cleaning your teeth. However, each of these things must be done continuously and carefully to avoid postoperative problems. This is a list of instructions which should help you in your postoperative recovery.

DIET

For now, it is important you maintain a **STRICT LIQUID DIET ONLY**. The plates and screws used to secure the jaw(s) in their new position take 6 weeks to stabilize, and thus your diet will need to progress slowly. **Do not use a straw for the first 48 hours after surgery as it can create more bleeding. Avoid cold milk products for 48 hours after surgery as it can adhere to the incision sites and may promote infections.** Attempt to drink from a cup as soon as possible, as this is the most effective way to take in liquids. Sometimes the use of a toddler “sippy cup” can help. If drinking from a cup seems to be impossible, another alternative is to obtain a **squeeze bottle to squirt fluid** into your mouth. This type of device can be obtained at most department stores, sporting goods stores, or bicycle shops.

Examples of nutrition that is safe to consume are:

- Protein shakes and smoothies
- Soup broth at a warm temperature
- Gatorade and water
- Boost or Ensure or other similar meal replacement drinks
- Any other food that is fully blenderized to a liquid consistency

PAIN MANAGEMENT

-----Baseline Pain Control Regimen-----

- 650 mg Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 2 x 325 mg tablets, or liquid equivalent, 4 times per day. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and right before bed. (Avoid Tylenol if you have been told not to take this medication or have liver failure)
- 600 mg Advil (Ibuprofen) 3 x 200mg tablets, or liquid equivalent, 4 times per day. Breakfast lunch, dinner, and right before bed. (Avoid ibuprofen if you have been told not to take this medication or if you have a history of stomach ulcers or kidney disease)
- Healthy people who stay properly hydrated can maintain this baseline pain control regimen for up to 3 weeks without any side effects. It is extremely important to maintain hydration in the post-operative period. If you are still needing this pain control after 3 weeks notify your surgeon.

-----**If Additional Pain Control is Needed**-----

- 2.5 – 5 mg Oxycodone ½ - 1 x tablet, or liquid equivalent, up to 4 times per day if needed for additional pain control.
- Do not stop taking the baseline pain control regimen if you need the oxycodone

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

In addition to the prescription for oxycodone you will be given several other prescription medications to aid in your recovery.

- *Antibiotics:* You will be given a prescription for an antibiotic such as amoxicillin or clindamycin, etc. This medication should be taken at the appropriate interval as described on the bottle. Be sure not to miss any doses and take the medicine until it is gone. **Note:** Some types of antibiotics reduce the contraceptive effects of birth control pills.
- *Anti-Nausea Medicine:* You will be given a prescription for Zofran (Ondansetron). If you are feeling nauseated after surgery this medication can be placed under the tongue. When placed under the tongue it will dissolve and be absorbed by your body. This medication should only be used if you are nauseous. It can be taken once every 6 hours if nausea persists.
- *Mouth Wash:* You will be given a prescription for Peridex (Chlorhexidine) which is a mouth wash that can help substitute for tooth brushing in the first week. Swish gently with ~15ml of this medication for 30 seconds and spit.

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS

Below are some medications available over the counter at any local pharmacy that may be helpful to aid in your recovery.

- *Decongestants:* Following orthognathic surgery, especially upper jaw surgery, there is considerable stuffiness of the nose and sinuses. If a decongestant is recommended, take the medication as indicated on the bottle for seven to ten days or as needed for congestion. A decongestant such as Sudafed® is better for clearing up a runny nose while a decongestant such as Mucinex® (Maximum Strength or DM) will better aid with thinning excess mucus secretions and build up in the back of the throat. **Note:** During this time, keeping the head elevated with a pillow or two will aid with the flow of congestion and keep secretions from building up in the back of the throat overnight. This will make sleeping a little easier. **Do not blow your nose for 10 days after you had upper jaw surgery.**
- *Nasal Spray:* (Afrin®, Neosynephrine® or equivalent) can be used as six to eight hour intervals to help improve breathing through your nose. In order to prevent overuse of the nasal spray, this can be alternated with plain saline (salt water or ocean spray) nasal spray. These sprays can be purchased from your pharmacy.

- *Lip Ointment*: You will be given a tube of lip ointment at the hospital. Use this for the first two days. Keep enough ointment on the lips to keep them looking wet. **After two days stop using the ointment and use plain Vaseline®.**
- *Stool Softener*: Taking an opiate derived pain reliever like oxycodone will eventually cause constipation. You can take Miralax (or a generic version), a very effective stool softener, while you are taking oxycodone to avoid constipation. Take as directed on the bottle.

ORAL HYGIENE

Maintaining proper oral hygiene can be extremely difficult post-operatively, but it is incredibly important to help prevent an infection from developing. We recommend purchasing a *baby toothbrush* as the smaller size and soft bristles will make it easier to keep your braces and teeth clean. It is important you brush your teeth at least twice a day, taking care to clean **the front of your teeth and braces only** (do not clean the gums because your surgical incisions are in that area). You may also be prescribed an antibacterial mouth rinse (e.g. Chlorhexidine) that can be used twice a day to help clean and prevent infection. **Do not use a water pik or electric toothbrush for the first 7 days after surgery.**

SWELLING REDUCTION STRATEGY

- First 72 hours –Limit Swelling Accumulation
 - Apply ice to limit accumulation of swelling. 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off while awake. (e.g. ice packs and head wrap provided, frozen peas/corn)
 - *Elastic facial dressing (jaw bra)*: This elastic bandage should be kept in place as much as possible for the first 24 hours without the ice if sleeping. After the first day, this bandage is not essential, but may help reduce swelling more quickly. Wearing this dressing at night will also help reduce swelling more quickly.
 - Elevate your head while sleeping and resting by using several pillows such that your head is above your heart. This will help reduce swelling accumulation.
 - Take NSAIDs (Ibuprofen/Advil) if instructed as part of the baseline pain control regimen above
- After 72 hours – Promote Resolution of Swelling
 - Apply moist heat to promote drainage of swelling which has accumulated during initial healing phase. (e.g. clay heat packs sold in drug store, moist towel heated in microwave)
 - Continuing to elevate your head while sleeping and resting by using several pillows such that your head is above your heart. This will improve swelling draining from the face.

ELASTICS (RUBBER BANDS)

Post-operative elastics are crucial to help establish and stabilize your new bite. Depending on your surgical movements, we will show you the location and quantity of elastics that you will be using in the post-operative period. These will change over time, so at each follow-up appointment we will review your elastic use and location as well as provide you with a diagram. You will also be provided with extra elastics and an “attacher” to use should an elastic fall off or break. Please be sure to secure this “attacher” in a safe location. It is normal that the elastics will limit your jaw movement; this is intentional.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Following surgery, you will find that your energy level is much lower. This will take some time to return to normal. When you attempt to return to normal physical activity start slowly and work up to your normal level. Physical exercise such as walking can begin immediately after surgery once you feel able. Other than a light walk, there should be no cardio or weight lifting exercises at this time. Jogging can begin 3 weeks after surgery, light weights 4 weeks after surgery, and heavy lifting or contact sports 6 weeks after surgery. Begin by going shorter distances and at a slower pace than usual to be sure you feel up to the exercise. As your endurance and confidence improve, gradually increase the level of exercise within a level of comfort.

SUTURES

- There will be sutures inside your lip where the incisions were made. These sutures will fall away on their own after 7-14 days. If the sutures fall away early, do not worry, they do not need to be replaced
- If you had lower jaw surgery, there will also be one suture on each cheek. These sutures will also fall away on their own and do not need to be removed.

JAW EXERCISES

Do not attempt to specifically stretch your jaw at this time, passive opening is ok for eating and hygiene. It is normal to have a restricted motion and for your muscles and bones to be stiff and sore. Jaw exercises will be introduced later in your recovery period.

As you can see, recovery from surgery requires a lot of effort on your part. We will be happy to answer any questions regarding diet, hygiene, elastics, exercise, or any other problem which may be of concern to you. Remember, postsurgical progress is sometimes uncomfortable and may occur slowly. However, with some determination and attention to these instructions, you can maximize your healing process. If you have any questions regarding your postoperative recovery, please do not hesitate to call us anytime at (650) 342 – 0213.

CORRECTIVE JAW SURGERY PRE OPERATIVE CHECK LIST

Your team at Peninsula Oral and Facial Surgery wants to ensure that you are properly prepared for your corrective jaw surgery to ensure a recovery that is as easy and comfortable as possible. To do so it is important that you properly prepare for your procedure and have the right tools for recovery. Below you will find a helpful checklist to make sure you are ready for a successful recovery.

If you ever have questions regarding these instructions, please do not hesitate to call our office. Our team is always available to help clarify any of these recommendations.

- Prescriptions - Your surgeon will prescribe the following prescriptions several days prior to your surgery. Please pick them up before your surgery so that you have them ready.
 - Oxycodone (Additional Pain Medicine)
 - Liquid Amoxicillin (Clindamycin if Penicillin Allergy)
 - Zofran (Anti-Nausea Medicine)
 - Chlorhexidine (Antibacterial Mouth Rinse)
- Over the Counter Medications – While at the pharmacy please pick up the following medications if you do not already have some at home.
 - Both pill form and liquid Tylenol[®] (Adult/Big Kid Formulation)
 - Both pill form and liquid Ibuprofen (Adult/Big Kid Formulation)
 - Miralax[®] (Stool Softener)
 - Afrin Nasal Spray (Decongestant Nasal Spray)
 - Vaseline[®] or Petroleum Jelly Lip Balm
- Pick up some sports drinks, juices, smoothies, meal supplements (Ensure[®], Boost[®]) yogurt etc for your first week. Check our Food Suggestion List (Link page 60) for ideas
- **DO NOT** Eat or Drink after midnight prior to surgery
- Brush your teeth before you come to the hospital or surgery center
- Remove any fingernail polish, makeup or mascara
- If you have long hair, put it into two pigtales
- If you are having outpatient surgery in the office, wear a loose comfortable shirt that does not need to be pulled over your head.