

## **Six Week Post-Operative Instructions for Corrective Jaw Surgery**

### **DIET**

You can begin to progress your diet back to normal. However, you should be careful and ease yourself back into the foods you enjoy. Tougher foods like apples, carrots, and tougher meats still may be several weeks away. Imagine you have been on crutches for 6 weeks and your doctor just told you that you can walk. If you went for a long run that first day (ate steak), your body just is not ready for that yet. Common sense dictates that food still be somewhat soft and cut into small pieces, as you slowly progress back to your regular diet.

### **ORAL HYGIENE**

You can now resume your normal, pre-operative oral hygiene routine. As always, it is important to continue to keep your mouth and braces clean to avoid dental decay.

### **ELASTICS (RUBBER BANDS)**

Post-operative elastics are crucial to help establish and stabilize your new bite. We will evaluate your bite and advise on the quantity of elastics to use and length of time and provide you with an elastic diagram. At this stage your orthodontist will likely take over the instructions on your elastic use.

### **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

**It is now safe to progress to more strenuous activity.** Let your body be your guide as you progress into more normal activities. It is now safe to begin progression back to sports. As always avoiding being hit in the head and face is recommended.

### **JAW EXERCISES**

It is now safe to begin **active jaw exercises**. Begin with two or three repetitions of the Hold and Relax exercises you have done previously. Then, place your middle finger on your lower teeth and your thumb on your upper teeth. Apply pressure that creates a feeling that you are stretching muscles with some feeling of tightness or mild discomfort. Hold this for five seconds then release and move your jaw side to side and open and close using just your jaw muscles for 30 seconds. Repeat the finger stretching, placing your fingers on the opposite side. Do three repetitions on each side, and repeat this cycle three times per day. Each time try to slightly increase the finger pressure to produce more opening. (Do this to produce only **mild** discomfort, do not push enough to create significant pain.) It is normal to be sore after each session, but your soreness should recover by the next morning. If you are waking up with soreness in your jaw muscles you are likely pushing yourself too hard. Reduce your intensity or frequency such that your body can recover overnight.



Congratulations you nearly completed your recovery from jaw surgery. If you have not already, you will begin post-operative orthodontics with your orthodontist shortly. You have invested a lot into this process, and we know you will get a lot out of it in the years to come. Just because your surgical recovery has completed, does not mean we do not want to hear from you. If you have any questions after your surgery, please do not hesitate to call us anytime at (650) 342 – 0213.