

Jaw Surgery and Jaw Fractures Post-Operative Instructions

What is Jaw Surgery (Orthognathic)?

Jaw surgery (or Orthognathic surgery) is the surgical correction of boney anomalies or malformations involving the lower jaw (mandible) or upper jaw (maxilla). These malformations may be present at birth or become evident as a child grows and develops.

After orthognathic surgery or a jaw fracture, your jaw will not be able to move much. In order to do this, your teeth may be wired or have elastic bands placed on them to hold your jaw/bite in place. You will need to be on a very soft or liquid diet for 4-6 weeks while healing from surgery.

What should I do to take care of myself after surgery?

- **Oral Care:**
 - Good mouth care (oral hygiene) is very important while your jaws are wired or banded. Keeping your mouth and teeth clean will help you heal properly and reduce the chances of developing infections or cavities.
 - After each meal, snack and at bedtime, brush your teeth with a soft bristled toothbrush (child size works well). Brush in circles and brush all the way to your gum line. Also after every meal, rinse your mouth with warm salt water. This is 1 teaspoon of salt in one 8 oz glass of water.
 - If brushing is impossible, a moistened Q-tip may be used to wipe over the gums and teeth. Avoid using products such as lemon glycerin swabs and mouthwashes containing alcohol (Listerine). These products can sometimes cause gums to become dry and irritated.

- **Do not smoke.** Smoking dries and irritates the gums and mouth. Also avoid alcohol which can cause nausea and dehydration.
- **Do not** use and oral water pic unless ordered by your surgeon.
- Avoid dry cracked lips by using Vaseline, Chapstick, Blistex, Carmex or Vitamin E.

What changes do I need to make to my diet?

Follow a high protein very soft or blenderized diet. Calorie and protein supplements, (Ensure, Carnation Instant Breakfast, Boost) can be used and are encouraged). Protein powders can also be used. A diet with adequate protein after surgery is important for healing. The craniofacial Nurse Practitioner can provide you with recipe books and current websites for further dietary suggestions.

What changes should I make to my activity level?

Do not participate in sports or strenuous exercise or return to work until permitted by your surgeon. Also, follow recommendations of the pain medication you are on. Often driving is not advised.

What are the possible side effects to surgery?

Sometimes patients may experience numbness around the surgery site or fracture. Avoid excessive heat, cold and sharp items to prevent injury. You will have moderate swelling after surgery. Ice packs after surgery will help with swelling. Sleeping with your head elevated will also help.

When will my return appointments be?

Your first appointment will be one to two weeks after your surgery. Please call our plastic surgery office at 734-763-8063 to arrange your first return appointment if it was not arranged at discharge.

What is the contact information?

If you have any question, problems or concerns call the Pediatric Plastic Surgery clinic from 8-5:00pm Monday thru Friday, 734-763-8063. After 5:00pm or on

the weekends if you have urgent issues call hospital paging at 734 936-4000 and ask the operator to page the Plastic Surgery Resident “on call”.

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