



**Post-Operative Instructions**  
**Jaw/Facial Skeletal Surgery**

*Please read your instructions carefully and call with any questions.*

**Position** When reclining, elevate your head and back with several pillows for the first 1-2 days after surgery. Lie on your back, rather than on your sides or stomach.

**Breathing** It is extremely important that you take deep breaths after surgery to prevent from developing pneumonia, which is a common occurrence after surgery if breathing exercises are not followed properly. A good example is to take 10-20 deep breaths every hour, while you are awake, as well as encouraging yourself to cough.

**Ice** Ice packs or cool damp wash cloths should be applied on or around the treated areas, especially over the eyes and cheeks. This will lessen the amount of swelling, bruising, and pain. If no bandages are present, place a cloth between the skin and the ice pack to protect the skin. Use ice for up to 45 minutes out of each waking hour for the first 24 hours. An easy schedule to follow is 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off.

**Heat** You may begin heat packs 12 hours after ice packs are stopped. If no bandage is present, a moist towel should be placed between the skin and the heat source. The moist heat will increase the circulation and help the body rid itself of swelling and bruising. DO NOT heat continuously. Use heat a maximum of 20 minutes per hour. The temperature should be closely monitored, **NEVER** set an electric heating pad above a medium setting. Any numbness in treated areas make it possible to burn your skin without knowing. To prevent serious injury from your electric heating pad **BE CERTAIN** it is approved for use with moisture. Heat may be used until the swelling and bruising have resolved.

**Diet First Day:** A liquid diet is recommended.

**First Week:** A liquid diet should be followed, anything that does not require chewing. **ABSOLUTELY NO CHEWING.**

**After One Week:** Your doctor will examine the healing process and advise you as to when you may slowly resume your regular diet. Liquid and or soft diet is often required for many weeks.

**Activity (I)** During your first post-operative day, stay up as much as possible. You should sit, stand, or walk around rather than remain in bed. However, you should rest when tired.

(II) Avoid bending over or lifting more than 5 pounds during the first week.

(III) Take extra precaution to protect your head and neck from bumps, hits or injuries.

**Hair Care** You may wash your hair after surgery. A mild baby shampoo is recommended.

**Dressings** Your nose will be stuffy and you can expect blood-tinged drainage for several days. You can wear a “drip dressing” under your nose. This can be changed as necessary. This dressing may be removed when the bleeding has stopped. **Packing:** You may have a internal nasal packing for 2-5 days. **DO NOT REMOVE** packing. We will do it this in our office. You will be a mouth breather until the packing is removed.

**Other** Begin oral hygiene three days after surgery. Use the prescribed medicated mouth rinse. Follow directions on bottle. Rinse gently with a capful of this solution 4-5 times a day. DO NOT begin to brush your teeth for five days. A gentle “children’s” toothbrush may be used on your teeth beginning the fifth day after surgery. The salt water rinse will help keep the surgical area clean. When you do begin gentle brushing of your teeth, make sure that you do not brush across the incisions with the bristles.

Your surgery was accomplished by an incision inside your mouth. Do not disturb sutures with your tongue. The only care necessary for intra-oral sutures is the mouth rinse described above.

You will be seen at one day and five days after surgery.

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**Cosmetics** You may apply cosmetics to untreated areas following surgery. Avoid any areas with skin stitches, abrasions or laser treatment. Make-up may be applied in the treated areas after the skin stitches have been removed (usually on the 5<sup>th</sup> post-operative day). Make-up may delay wound healing and possibly produce a permanent tattoo if it comes in contact with treated areas too soon.

**Sports** No swimming, gym, or strenuous activities for two weeks. No diving, biking or skiing for two months. Passive exercise is permitted, like walking. Any other questions should be directed to your surgeon.

**Sun Exposure** Protect your facial skin from excessive sun exposure as long as the treated area(s) are still pink. When the treated area(s) are no longer pink, ordinary exposure is not harmful, but a sunscreen should always be used.

**Medications *Pain Reliever:*** take one tablet when you arrive at home. Additional tablets may be taken every 4-6 hours as needed for pain relief. **CAUTION:** Do not drive or operate machinery while taking pain relievers. Take with food or liquid to avoid nausea.

***Sleep Medications:*** if prescribed, take one tablet 30-45 minutes prior to bedtime.

***Antibiotics:*** if prescribed, take them as indicated on the bottle and complete the full course of pills until finished.

***Aspirin:*** avoid taking aspirin or aspirin containing compounds during your first week after surgery.

***Anti-swelling:*** (dexamethasone) if prescribed, take one tablet when you arrive home, and then again the first evening. The remaining tablets should be taken over the next two days. These will help to reduce the amount of local swelling.

**If upper jaw (maxilla) surgery was performed:**

***Over the Counter Medications:*** Actifed tablets one tablet three times a day for congestion.

***Nasal Sprays:*** If no nasal packing is present, you may begin nasal sprays immediately.

***Afrin spray*** – 2 sprays each nostril twice a day for congestion

***Oceans Nasal Mist*** – 2 sprays each nostril as often as needed for dryness.

***Humidifier:*** This will help relieve the above symptoms, especially during sleep.

**DO NOT:** Blow your nose

Drink through a straw, or vigorously suck

Smoke

Sneeze-if you must, do so with your mouth open

**PLEASE REPORT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TO OUR OFFICE:**

Sudden or excessive bleeding, swelling, or bruising.

Any itching, rash or reaction to medications.

Fever, temperature over 100 degrees (taken orally).

Discharge from the incision (other than blood).

ANY INJURY TO THE FACE.

*Faithful adherence to pre-operative and post-operative instructions will help to minimize swelling, pain and discomfort. If you do have any problems, **please** do not hesitate to contact me for assistance. (330.721.2323).*

**I have received/read and understand the importance of following the above instructions.**

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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