



Postoperative Care

Jaw Surgery

Maxillofacial Surgery Department 290

Medications & Use of Aspirin

- The use of aspirin or medications that contain aspirin-like products (such as Motrin or Advil) should be avoided two weeks PRIOR to surgery. Take Tylenol for headaches and minor pain.
- Pain Medication: Take as directed after surgery. **NO DRIVING OR OPERATING HEAVY MACHINERY WHILE TAKING NARCOTIC PAIN MEDICATION.** No drinking alcohol while taking pain medication or antibiotics.
- Antibiotics: Take as directed, if prescribed.
- Decongestants: Take for nasal congestion, if prescribed.

Smoking

- Smoking should be stopped for at least two weeks before surgery and no smoking while you are healing. Smoking impairs blood circulation and good circulation is necessary for good healing. An adequate blood supply results in a good surgical result for you.

Head Position

- Elevate your head and back using several pillows or use a recliner chair with the head at a 45 degree angle. It is important to do so for one week after surgery. Lie on your back, rather than on your side or stomach.

Use of Ice

- Ice may be used over the surgical sites for the first 24 hours around the clock. After 24 hours, it will not change the amount of swelling but will feel good. Use the ice in a Zip-Lock bag, or use iced gauzes over the cheeks.

Activities After Surgery

- During the first day after surgery, stay up as much as possible. You should sit, stand, or walk rather than remain in bed. However, you should rest when you become tired. Avoid bending over or lifting greater than 5 pounds during the first 4 weeks. Stay away from any activity that raises the blood pressure in your face for 4 weeks, as excessive pressure may cause a severe bleed.
- Avoid excessive talking and extreme facial movements which may cause increased bleeding or bruising. You CAN talk even with elastics or wires in place. Avoid trauma to your face (i.e. dogs or kids jumping up, people hugging you). You can begin passive exercises or easy walking after the first week.

Diet

- Day of Surgery, Post-Op: Start with clear cool liquids and when these are tolerated, advance to warm, not hot, fluids and soft, blenderized food.
- One Week After Surgery: You may eat soups, dairy products, shakes, apple sauce, mashed potatoes, overcooked pasta, anything that does not need chewing.
- Make sure you drink lots of fluids during your post-op recovery, at least eight 8-oz glasses a day for about 4 weeks. After 6-8 weeks you may resume your normal diet, starting with soft foods and gentle chewing. **PLEASE EAT SIX TO EIGHT MEALS A DAY.**



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Sinus Precautions

- **NO NOSE BLOWING FOR FOUR WEEKS.** Use Afrin nasal spray as directed for 72 hours. Do not use longer than 72 hours. Use Saline Nasal Spray as often as desired to keep the nose moist and to clean the nose. You may gently clean the inside of the nose that you can see with a moist Q-Tip.
- Nose bleeds may occur. Pinch the outside of the nose, lie down, and relax. Afrin will help decrease nose bleeds.
- Red or brown drainage may occur from the sinuses. Gently dab with a tissue.
- Use of a humidifier may relieve nasal congestion and stuffiness.

Mouthwash Use

- **Mouth Rinse:** Use chlorhexidine as directed, if prescribed. Do NOT use Scope or Listerine for the first 1 – 2 weeks. After that, you may use mouthwash diluted 50 – 50 with water. Use Salt-Water rinses 5 – 6 times per day (Mix 1 cup of water with ½ teaspoon of salt). Do not use hydrogen peroxide.

Altered Sensations

- Following lower jaw surgery, it is normal to have complete or partial numbness of the lower lip and chin for months. This is usually temporary and the tingling “pins and needles” sensation is a sign of the gradual return to normal.
- Surgery of the upper jaw will cause numbness of the skin below the eyes, along the side of the nose, and upper cheek areas. This, too, is usually temporary and should disappear in a about one year.

Heat

- Begin moist heat on the 5 – 7 post-op day. A moist towel should be placed between the skin and the heat source. Do not use heat continuously, only 20 minutes per hour and use four times per day for a two week period.

Sports

- No gym exercise, weight lifting, or strenuous activity for one month. No contact sports for three months. Avoid any activity which may cause trauma to your face. You may begin passive exercise, such as walking, after the first week.

Hair Care

- Resume your normal routine but you may need to have someone help you wash your hair for the first 1 – 2 weeks.

Shaving

- Resume shaving when the swelling subsides and the area is not tender. Do not shave in areas where stitches have been placed until the stitches have been removed.



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Bruising & Swelling

- These are to be expected. Bruising usually will be gone in a few weeks. The swelling will take about 2 – 4 weeks to reduce and several months to completely disappear.
- Swelling may be quite dramatic and can be decreased by use of ice packs.

Bathing

- Warm showers from the shoulders down are fine. Hot water may cause you to feel light-headed. If you feel dizzy, lean back against the shower wall and slide down to a sitting position. After your first post-op visit, you may shower as usual. Keep dry any dressings that are in place.

Infection

- Although uncommon, an infection of the surgical site can occur. Signs/Symptoms of infection can include any or all of the following: fever, chills, increased swelling (delayed), or drainage of bad-tasting fluid from the incisions. Any of these conditions should be IMMEDIATELY reported to your surgeon.
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Care for your Incision

- Brush your teeth (stay on the teeth and orthodontic brackets) 3 times a day. Rinse with salt water solution after each meal and before bed.
- Wear chin tape or jaw support, if present.

Follow Up Appointments

- 1 week, 2 weeks, 4 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year.
- The splint, if present, will be removed sometime between 2- 6 weeks.
- If you wore your splint for six weeks, please make an appointment with the orthodontist for the same day when the splint is removed. A heavy wire will need to be placed across the braces.

When should I call the department?

- Call Maxillofacial Surgery Clinic at (408) 851-2396** if any of the symptoms listed below appear:
 - ❖ Excessive bleeding
 - ❖ Any itching, rash, or reaction
 - ❖ Temperature above 101 degrees (taken orally)
 - ❖ Sudden swelling or recurrence of swelling
 - ❖ Difficulty breathing/swallowing
 - ❖ Swelling of the tongue area
 - ❖ Wound breakdown

**** The clinic is open Monday-Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm. It is closed on all major holidays and weekends. For after-hours urgent care, please call the Kaiser Call Center at (408) 559-9800.**