



Mission Valley Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Inc.

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Post Operative Instructions For Corrective Jaw Surgery

We ask that you and your family read this information prior to your surgery. If there are any questions; please feel free to call. Also, while you are in the operating room, your family may choose this time to come to our office and discuss post-operative care. Be sure you keep these instructions at home for reference.

- 1. Pain Medication:** You will receive pain medication instructions for use when you go home. Use the medication as needed. Most patients find that there is not a great deal of intense pain from this type of surgery. Generally, it is more of a dull ache in the bone. If possible, we recommend using Motrin or Extra Strength Tylenol during the day and using the narcotic medication in the evening, as it will help you get to sleep. If you should have to use the narcotic medication during the day, remember that it will make you drowsy - and we want you to be awake and active during the day. As before surgery, please avoid using aspirin due to its blood- thinning properties.
- 2. Lip Balm:** You may receive some lip ointment. The ointment is to be used in a very thin layer. This is not a moisture cream, it is strictly used to help control the swelling in the lips. We ask that you discard the ointment in three days. Should your lips become red and irritated, discard the ointment immediately, as it is not that critical to your postoperative care. Should you desire, use a lip balm such as Vaseline, Blistex, etc., once you discontinue the lip ointment. Patients who are wired together will need to have some type of lip balm with them at all times, since they are unable to moisten their lips as they normally would.
- 3. Oral hygiene** is extremely important, because the mouth is an easy place to get an infection due to the normal bacteria and food present. You should brush as best as you possibly can *at least* three times daily. Incisions from both upper and lower jaw surgery are quite a distance away from the teeth, so it is unlikely that you will jab yourself with the toothbrush as long as you stay on the teeth and the gum tissue around the teeth. Toothpaste is fine. A small toothbrush will be easier to use. It is important for you to combine toothbrushing with the use of a mouth rinse (2/3 mouth rinse, 1/3 peroxide) for the first week. After that, the



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mouth rinse mixture is optional. If you have elastics, they should be removed when you brush and rinse. You will also need to use the Periogard rinse twice a day. People who are wired together will obviously be brushing the outsides of the teeth only. *In these cases, the use of the mouth rinse is critical.* It is okay to begin using a Water Pik immediately after surgery. You must direct the spray at the teeth only; begin on the lower setting, and as the weeks progress, gradually increase the power. We recommend *not* going to the expense of buying a Water Pik unless you plan to continue using it after you have completed treatment.

4. **Muscle Spasm:** You may experience muscle spasms. Application of ice will help soothe the muscles. Hold it on the sides of the face and up into the temple area. It is normal for blood clots to break down at night, therefore, we advise covering pillows with a towel to protect linens. We also recommend sleeping with the head elevated, if possible, for the first week.
5. **Eating:** You have been given a menu book with some excellent recipes for a “non chewing” diet. This along with a diet supplement such as Ensure or Boost three times a day will provide a balanced nutrition. We advise you *not* to bite into anything, even if it seems very soft. Biting on the front teeth puts too much pressure on the bone screws, and these are the only mechanisms holding the jaw segments in place at this time. After four weeks you may gradually resume a more normal diet.
6. **Swelling:** Facial swelling may get worse thirty-six to forty-eight hours after surgery. Ice packs are only effective for the first twenty-four hours following surgery. If it feels good to keep ice on your face after this time period, that’s fine, so long as you understand that it will not help control the swelling. A low-grade temperature is common the first day or two after surgery, but it is not necessary to take your temperature, as it will resolve by itself. Ice packs may soothe the face if it feels warm.
7. **Nasal spray** is mainly for UPPER JAW SURGERY patients who will predictably have nasal stuffiness due to the location of the surgical site. For the nasal spray to be effective, the tip of the bottle must be inserted into the nostril, then tilted down (the nasal passage does not go straight up, it curves back toward the throat). You must give a very healthy squirt of spray so that you taste it in the back of your throat--this is the only way you will know that you have gotten



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the spray effectively into the affected area. This must be done in both nostrils. Wait two weeks before blowing the nose to eliminate possible hemorrhage. No heavy lifting or straining of facial muscles during the first two weeks following surgery. (Caution should be taken during bowel movements, especially if constipated.) Please do not use the spray more than once every eight to ten hours; using it more often than this will render the spray ineffective.

8. Finally, the person who tries to remain active after surgery recovers much more quickly than the person who goes home and crawls into bed thinking about the surgery. During the first week after surgery, you will experience "ups and downs." Remember that almost *everyone* has second thoughts about their surgery during the first week...wondering if they should have done this to themselves. Hang in there, the second week will look much rosier!

Please call the office at (619)298-2200 with questions. If you call after hours, one of the doctors will be paged

