

# Discharge Instructions After Jaw Surgery

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## What should I eat and drink after my surgery?

You will be on a liquid diet (only drinking or eating non-solid food) for the first 2 weeks after surgery, or until your rubber bands are changed from heavy to light. After this, you will follow a soft food diet until 6 weeks after your surgery.

- Protein will help you heal after your surgery.
  - Protein shakes like Ensure®, Boost®, Premier Protein®, Muscle Milk®, and Carnation Breakfast Essentials® are good sources of protein and calories.
  - You can add protein powder to your blended foods (smoothies or shakes).
- Don't drink alcohol or carbonated drinks (like soda or sparkling water).

## How will I eat after my surgery?

We will give you urinary **catheters** (flexible tubes) and syringes to help you eat. Instructions:

1. Fill the syringe with your blended food.
2. Attach the open end of the catheter to the tip of the syringe, and then cut the catheter to a comfortable length.
3. Insert the other end of the catheter into your mouth, and then use the syringe plunger to push the food through the catheter and into your mouth.

We know that this is not a very easy or comfortable way to eat. We also recommend using squeeze bottles like condiment bottles or wash bottles to eat (you can buy these online).

## **How will I manage my pain after surgery?**

- We will prescribe acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Motrin®) to help with your pain. You should take these medications all day (except for when you're sleeping) for 3-5 days after your surgery. Take these medications together every 6 hours.
  - For example, take both Tylenol® and Motrin® at 9:00am, 3:00pm, and 9:00pm.
- We will also prescribe oxycodone for pain control, if you need it. Only take oxycodone if your pain is not relieved by the Tylenol® and Motrin®.
- Use an ice pack on your jaw for 15-20 minutes at a time. This will help with pain and swelling.
- Swelling in your jaw and face after surgery can cause some ear symptoms such as pain, pressure, or a feeling that your ears are full. Let our office know if you are having these symptoms.

## **How will I take my medications when I get home?**

All the medications we will be prescribing you will be in liquid form. If you have other medications you need to take, you should reach out to the provider who prescribes these to you before your surgery. You should let them know you are having jaw surgery and you will need liquid medication.

## **Will I have swelling after surgery?**

You will have swelling after surgery. The swelling will continue for 3-5 days after your surgery, and then it will slowly decrease over the next several weeks to months.

- Ice is best for the first 5 days after surgery to help reduce swelling. Put the ice pack on your jaw for 15-20 minutes, and then take it off for 15-20 minutes to give your skin a break from the cold.
- Do not put anything hot (like a heat pack) on your jaw until your doctor says it's okay. Heat can increase swelling.

- Sleep with your head elevated (raised up) at a 30-45 degree angle for the first week after surgery. This will help decrease swelling. To do this, you can use a wedge pillow or sleep in a recliner.

### **How can I keep my lips hydrated?**

Use lots of Vaseline®, Chapstick®, Blistex®, Carmex®, or vitamin E on your lips and the skin around your lips. Don't peel dead skin off your lips, as it may be attached to deeper tissues and you might make your lips bleed.

### **Will my face feel numb after surgery?**

You may have some feelings of numbness in your face and lips. This may last for several weeks or months, and it will get better with time.

### **Will I have nasal congestion (a stuffy nose) after surgery?**

If you had upper jaw surgery, you will have nasal congestion. If you had lower jaw surgery, you probably won't have nasal congestion. Nasal swelling and congestion will be worse in the 48 hours after surgery and will decrease over the next 2-3 weeks.

- If you had upper jaw surgery, don't blow your nose for 2 weeks after your surgery.
- You may use a prescription nasal spray like Afrin® for 3 days, and a liquid decongestant like pseudoephedrine for 5 days, to help your nasal congestion.
- Sleeping in an upright position at night for the first week after your surgery will help your nasal congestion.

### **How can I avoid getting an infection after surgery?**

If your doctor gives you an antibiotic medication to use after your surgery, take it as prescribed until it is gone. Keep your mouth as clean as possible.

- **Avoid all smoking or vaping until after your follow-up visit 6 weeks after your surgery.**

### **How should I clean my mouth after surgery?**

Clean your mouth with Peridex® mouth rinse. **Avoid all other mouth rinses.** These may burn, irritate the incisions (cuts) made around your jaw during surgery, or make your stitches dissolve too quickly.

- Use the Peridex® mouth rinse or rinse with warm salt water at least 2 times a day after brushing your teeth for 2 weeks after surgery.
- Use a child-sized, soft-bristled toothbrush to clean your teeth and braces (avoid the stitches and incisions).
- You may also use a Waterpik® or water flosser on a low setting to help keep your mouth clean. Avoid pointing it at the stitches or incisions.

### **What if I have nausea or vomiting?**

Let our office know if you are nauseous or vomiting. We will prescribe an anti-nausea medication for you that you can pick up from your pharmacy.

- If you have to vomit, bend over a sick or toilet bowl and let the fluids pass between the spaces in your teeth.
- Remove your elastics if you need to, and call our office to replace the elastics when you are feeling better.

### **Will I have a splint placed during my surgery?**

Sometimes the doctor has to place a splint in your mouth during your surgery. This will help balance your bite and train your muscles to work in the new jaw position. The splint will remain in place until your follow-up appointment 6 weeks after your surgery.

## **When do I need to see my orthodontist again after my surgery?**

We would like you to make an appointment to see your orthodontist in the 2-3 days after you have your 6-week follow-up appointment with us.

## **What kind of activities can I do after surgery?**

- Slowly restart your normal activities. You can walk and move around, but you should not do any exercises, running, or lifting anything heavier than 15 pounds for 6 weeks after surgery, even if you're feeling well.
- Avoid any contact sports, any sport with a ball, or any aggressive sports for 6 weeks after surgery.
- You may return to work or school when you feel better and when you are no longer taking any oxycodone.

## **Helpful items to buy and use after your surgery:**

- Search online for “**condiment bottles**” or “**wash bottles.**” These can help with eating and drinking for the first 2 weeks after surgery.
- Search online for “**wedge pillow.**” This will help with swelling and nasal congestion.
- Search online for “**facial ice pack.**” This can help with swelling and pain after surgery.

## **What is the contact information for the clinic?**

Pediatric Plastic Surgery Clinic

- Between 8:00am-4:30pm Monday-Friday, call (734) 998-6022 or send us a message through the online patient portal at [MyUofMHealth.org](http://MyUofMHealth.org).
- After 4:30pm or on weekends, for urgent issues, call the hospital at 734-936-4000. Ask the operator to page the “**on-call pediatric plastic surgeon.**”

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