

TMJ Arthroscopy

Post-Operative Instructions

What can I expect after surgery?

- Following surgery, you will spend a brief period of time in the recovery room. Once you have recovered from the anesthesia, you will be discharged with the appropriate prescriptions and home care instructions below. You must arrive with a responsible adult who will drive you home and care for you after the surgery.
- Swelling is normal after surgery and may take 5-7 days to improve.
- You may experience a temporary change in your bite. If so, this will usually resolve in 5-7 days.
- You may notice clicking in your jaw joint that was not present before. This may be normal and is not a cause for concern.
- You may have numbness and possible temporary paralysis of the face on the side of the surgery. This is usually caused by local anesthetic (numbing medication) administered for your comfort and should only last for a few hours.

What are my post-operative instructions?

- Apply ice packs to the affected side of the face for the first 12-24 hours.
- While in bed, keep your head elevated with 2-3 pillows to minimize swelling.
- Resorbable sutures (aka. Stitches) are placed over your incisions. These stitches will dissolve so there is no need to remove any stitches.
- You may shower anytime. To dry, lightly pat your face with a towel instead of rubbing it.
- After the first 48 hours, you may apply warm heat (ie. heating pads or microwave a wet cloth) to the jaw muscles and temples as needed for

comfort.

What should my activity level be?

- Avoid any strenuous physical activity for 1 week.
- You may return to school or light duty work (non-physical labor) within a week of the surgery or as tolerated per your symptoms.

What should my activity level be?

Begin jaw-stretching exercises as soon as possible after surgery:

1. **Pry bar:** Pry the upper and lower teeth apart using your index finger on the lower teeth and your thumb on the upper teeth. Scissor or spread the teeth apart to stretch your jaw until you feel some tightness and hold it for 2-3 seconds. Repeat this maneuver 20 times in the morning, afternoon, and evening, for a total of 60 times daily.
2. It may help to apply warm heat over your jaw muscles before and after these stretching exercises.
3. Since these jaw-stretching exercises are likely to cause some discomfort, you may take analgesics (pain killers) one hour prior.

Are there diet restrictions after surgery?

- A soft diet is recommended for 1-2 weeks after your surgery (e.g. yogurt, eggs, mashed potatoes, overcooked pasta, etc.).
- Avoid hard, crunchy or chewy foods for 1-2 weeks.
- Drink plenty of water and other liquids to stay well hydrated.

How do I manage pain after surgery?

Your doctors will prescribe analgesics (pain killers) based on your health history and current medications. Please take them as prescribed. The most common medications prescribed after TMJ arthroscopy include:

- Anti-inflammatory medications such as:
 - Toradol
 - Naprosyn
 - Ibuprofen

Note: If two different anti-inflammatory medications are prescribed, complete the first prescription before starting the second one. **Avoid taking two different types of anti-inflammatories at the same time.**

- Muscle relaxants such as:
 - Flexeril
 - Valium

Note: Our goal is to tailor the treatment to your specific needs. Your doctor may prescribe other medications as needed.

What follow-up care will I receive?

Your doctor's office will call you to schedule a follow-up appointment. Usually this appointment will take place 2-3 weeks after surgery.

When should I call my doctor?

- If you have difficulty breathing
- If you have increased swelling 2-3 days after surgery
- If you have difficulty closing your eyes after surgery
- If you are unable to urinate
- If you have severe pain that is not relieved by medications
- If you experience a rash, nausea, vomiting, severe headache, severe constipation, or other unexpected reactions
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.5 degrees.
- If you have a question or concern that must be addressed prior to the follow-up visit.

Who should I call if I have questions?

- (734) 936-5950, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

UMHS Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
TMJ Arthroscopy Post-Operative Instructions

- After hours and on weekends, call Hospital Paging at (734) 936-6267 and ask for the Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon on call.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Erin Larowe
Reviewers: Ron Aronovich, DMD

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#). Last Revised 3/2016