

# Corrective Jaw Surgery Post-Operative Care Instructions

Montreal General Hospital - Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery



# Post-operative instructions

## Nasal congestion/Throat soreness:

- ▶ Related to the endotracheal tube that was placed during surgery.
- ▶ Use a saline nasal spray frequently to keep nasal passages clean. It is normal to feel congested following your surgery.
- ▶ Should resolve in a few days after your surgery.



## Pain and Swelling:

- ▶ Pain and swelling is usually at its highest 48-72 hours after surgery, and should slowly decrease over the course of 2 weeks.
- ▶ You will be prescribed pain medications - take them as directed by your physician.
- ▶ Some pain medications may cause constipation. You can purchase over-the-counter stool softeners if not prescribed.
- ▶ Apply ice to the face for the first 2-3 days after surgery for periods of 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off. On the third day post-surgery, you may use moist heat for 20-30 minutes intervals.
- ▶ For the first week after surgery, sleep in an upright position or with 2 pillows behind the head can help reduce swelling.
- ▶ Keep the compression dressing or “jaw bra” in place for 48 hours, if tolerated.



# Post-operative instructions

## Numbness:

- ▶ Following your surgery, you will experience areas of altered sensation or partial numbness to the lip, chin, tongue, cheeks and teeth.
- ▶ During the first three to six months the small nerve fibers will regenerate and recover.
- ▶ As healing takes place, you may encounter sensations of warmth and tingling over the affected areas. These may remain longer than six months, and in some cases, altered sensation may persist for extended periods. Patients often adjust to this altered sensation without great difficulty.

## Bruising:

- ▶ Moderate to severe bruising can be expected.
- ▶ Will shortly appear after surgery and may last for 2 weeks.

# Post-operative instructions

## Bleeding:

- ▶ It is normal to have small amount of bleeding after jaw surgery, from the surgical site or nose. If you encounter a significant bleed from the surgical site or nose, please contact the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery resident on call at the MGH.
- ▶ Blood in the saliva or on your pillow is common for up to one week after surgery.
- ▶ To control bleeding, keep your head elevated and apply ice to the area.
- ▶ Use gauze, if not available, a clean cloth or damp tea bag to apply gentle pressure.

## Nausea:

- ▶ You may drink a small amount of carbonated drinks (i.e. Gingerale, 7up/Sprite, etc.) every 5 to 6 hours to help relieve this feeling.
- ▶ You have take anti-nausea medications if prescribed or you may use over-the-counter anti-nausea medication like Gravol.
- ▶ Narcotic pain medications can cause nausea. Try to use Tylenol or Ibuprofen instead.
- ▶ If your nausea is persistent, please contact our clinic.



# Post-operative instructions

## Infection:

- ▶ If you were prescribed antibiotics by your physician, take it as prescribed and complete the course of treatment.
- ▶ Signs of infection include: increased pain or swelling after 5 days, a foul taste or odor in your mouth, an oral temperature above 38°C.

## Return to work/school:

- ▶ You can anticipate being absent for at least 2 weeks and up to 4 weeks from work or school.
- ▶ You are encouraged to return to school or work as soon as you are feeling well enough to do so.

# Post-operative instructions

## Diet:

- ▶ The first 2 weeks after surgery should be a blenderized/liquid diet: clear liquids (water, soft drinks, Gatorade, clear soups), smoothies, ice creams, yogurts, protein drinks and protein supplements.
- ▶ After 3 weeks, if no complications and after discussion with your surgeon, you may start a non-chew/soft diet (i.e. mash potatoes, scrambled eggs, fish, over-boiled/soft pastas, etc.).
- ▶ After 6-8 weeks, you can progress to more normal chewing after discussing with your surgeon. Continue to avoid overly hard foods and placing too much pressure on the jaw until at least 3 months after surgery.
- ▶ You may consider incorporating dietary supplements like Ensure, Boost, etc.



# Post-operative instructions

## Oral hygiene:

It is highly important to maintain good oral hygiene to help prevent post-operative infections as well as dental decay and/or gum disease.

- ▶ Use warm salt water ( $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt in a cup of warm water) regularly after eating. You may also use Chlorhexidine or Peridex mouthwash if prescribed - use as instructed.
- ▶ Brush your teeth regularly with a SOFT bristle baby toothbrush (you may remove the elastics to brush thoroughly, but be sure to replace them after).
- ▶ Do NOT use a Waterpik for the first two weeks after surgery. Food debris could be forced through the incision sites.



# Post-operative instructions

## Activity:

- ▶ No strenuous physical activity or any activity for at least 6 weeks after surgery
- ▶ No strenuous running, weight lifting, etc.
- ▶ No contact sports
- ▶ Short walks or light activity is recommended

## Physiotherapy:

- ▶ Mouth/Jaw exercises (opening and closing of your mouth as wide as you can in a slow and passive manner) are recommended after surgery
- ▶ In the first 2 weeks, you should aim to open your mouth 2 finger breadths. By week 3-4, you should be able to open your mouth 3 finger breadths
- ▶ This is accomplished by placing warm packs over the area of your right and left jaw joints and gently massaging the joint, followed by opening your jaw as wide as you can in a slow and passive manner.
- ▶ Listen to your surgeon's directives regarding mouth/jaw exercises.



# Post-operative instructions

## Chin dressing:

- ▶ If you received a chin surgery (genioplasty), please leave the chin dressing for 5 days after your surgery
- ▶ You may shower, but keep the chin dressing dry
- ▶ On day 5, you may remove the dressing. This is best done in the shower (the steam will help to remove the dressing easier)



## Sinus precautions:

If you received an upper jaw surgery (Le Fort I osteotomy or SARPE), you must remain on sinus precautions for at least 4 weeks.

- ▶ No smoking
- ▶ No nose blowing
- ▶ No closed nose or closed mouth sneezing
- ▶ No straws
- ▶ No flying, swimming or scuba diving

# Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

## Contact information

**Montreal General Hospital - Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery**

1650 avenue Cedar A3-101  
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1A4

**Telephone number:** (514) 934-8063 ext. #45570  
**Option:** [option 9 for English] 2 + 5 + 5

For any emergencies, please contact our clinic or present yourself to the  
Emergency Department of the Montreal General Hospital.

After clinic hours, you can page the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery resident on-  
call at the Montreal General Hospital (514) 934-1934 ext. #53333

# Follow-up Appointment

[  ] Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Montreal General Hospital, 1650 avenue Cedar A3-101, Montreal, Quebec H3G 1A4

[  ] Will be arranged by the surgeon's private office

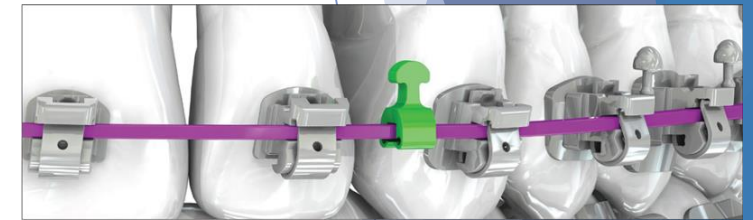
Notes:

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# Surgical screws/hooks & Elastics



You may have elastics placed to hold your jaws by using surgical screws or orthodontic hooks. Please follow the elastic pattern as shown above when you need to replace them, if needed.