



Post-Operative Instructions: Orthognathic Surgery

- Go to your nearest emergency room if you are having trouble breathing.
- Facial swelling will increase for the first 48–72 hours. Apply ice packs (20 minutes on/20 minutes off) and keep your head elevated (extra pillow or recliner). Most of the swelling will resolve within the first few weeks; however, healing will continue for 4–6 months.
- Bruising may occur after a few days. In some cases, the bruising may extend onto your upper chest.
- You may shower, but try to keep the bandages dry. A small band-aid may be applied if they come off.
- No smoking.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages.
- Brush the teeth gently with a child size soft bristle brush. You may use toothpaste. Your gums will have reduced sensation. Be careful not to injure the gums while brushing.
- You may use a mouth rinse.
- If you are given an antibiotic, it should be taken as directed for 5 days. The first dose may be taken when you arrive at home.
- Take your medication as directed. If you are not allergic or intolerant to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, start taking Tylenol® along with Aleve® every 6 hours as needed for pain, or as instructed by your doctor at the time of your surgery. If you are asthmatic, do not take ibuprofen unless you have tolerated it in the past. Be sure to take your pain medicines with food; this will help prevent nausea.
- Do not lie in bed all day. This can lead to pneumonia and blood clots. Light activity is acceptable, even good. Try to be out of bed during the daytime.
- You should not drive if you are taking pain medication.
- Please notify your doctor if you feel that your bite has shifted.

In addition to the above, for upper jaw surgery patients:

Nasal congestion and minor nosebleeds are expected. You may sniff back or wipe the nose, but do not blow. You may use saline nasal spray to loosen clots and mucus. Afrin® Nasal Spray may be used for severe congestion, but no more than two consecutive days.

We understand that the first week after surgery can be difficult. Although the swelling peaks at 2–3 days after surgery, it doesn't really start to come down until after the first week. At 2 weeks after surgery, usually 70% of the swelling has resolved. For the final swelling and numbness to resolve, it will take weeks to months after surgery. It is not unusual to be more swollen or numb on one side vs. the other.

12 weeks

You will need to be seen 12 weeks after surgery, and then every 3 months until your braces are off. After your braces come off, you will need to come into the office for final records.