

Post-Operative Instructions: Arthrocentesis

A small bandage or wrap may be placed over your surgical site. This should remain in place for as long as the surgeon advises. A small amount of blood may be noted on the bandage. This is normal.

Apply antibiotic ointment to the area 2 times per day. It is okay to shower and shampoo starting the day after surgery. You may rewrap the site as necessary.

You can expect some bruising and swelling at the surgical site. Apply ice pack to affected side (for 20-minute intervals) during the first 48 hours after surgery. After 48 hours, discontinue ice packs.

Keep head elevated, especially while sleeping or resting, for at least 24 hours.

You may be prescribed a muscle relaxer, pain medication, antibiotics, and/or anti-inflammatory medication. Take all medications as ordered. Pain medications should be taken only as needed.

For 1 week following surgery, your diet should consist of a soft diet, as chewing may disrupt the joint. The diet does not have to be limited to liquids, but the consistency should be that of cottage cheese, pasta, egg salad, mashed potatoes, and other soft foods that do not require heavy chewing. Your surgeon will give you specific diet recommendations.

Avoid bending over, heavy lifting, or any activities that cause increased pressure in the head region.

You will have a follow-up appointment scheduled for you, usually within 7–10 days. It is important for you to come to this appointment.

If you wore a splint before surgery, you may continue to wear the splint as you did before surgery.

Starting the day after surgery, you will need to begin jaw exercises to reduce stiffness in the joint associated with the surgery.

Using the tongue blades you are given, stretch the jaw as directed. Start with as many blades as will fit in your mouth. Each day, add at least one blade until all blades are used, and jaw is open to a full 40 mm. This exercise needs to be completed 7 times per day, with 7 repetitions each time, maintaining each hold for at least 7 seconds.

Thank you for letting us participate in your care. If you have any questions or concerns, call the office at (903) 534-1414.