



Facial Fracture Postoperative Instructions

Recovery

Your jaws may be numb for a period of time after surgery. Some of the numbness may wear off over several hours. However, due to the nature of the surgery or fracture, you may have some numbness on your lips, chin, or cheek which may last for several months or longer. If you have had any outpatient surgery, the anesthesia may make you drowsy and tired for the rest of the day. You should not drive a motor vehicle, operate any dangerous machinery, or make important decisions for 24 hours after surgery.

Fixation

Holding your teeth and jaws together and immobile is termed "fixation." You will have arch bars and wires to fixate your jaw and will not be able to open your mouth.

Swelling

The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and sides of the face is common. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. It will gradually decrease over the next several days. Swelling may be minimized by the use of ice packs. After 36 hours, ice has no beneficial effect and moist heat can be used thereafter.

Pain

Prescribed medication should be taken as directed. Do not exceed the recommended dose of pain medication.

Antibiotics

If you have been prescribed antibiotics, take as directed. Discontinue use in the event of a rash or other unfavorable reaction. Call the office if you have any questions.

Oral Hygiene

Good oral hygiene is essential to good healing. A child's toothbrush is helpful in order to brush all of the teeth and small wires. Beginning the day of surgery, you should brush, gargle, and rinse your mouth with mouthrinse and saltwater to prevent food deposits from accumulating on your wires. Using a WaterPik may be helpful, but should not be used unless recommended by your doctor.

Diet

Maintaining a good diet and staying well-nourished are a major part of successful recovery and healing. Since your teeth are wired together, you will not be able to chew solid foods and will be on a liquid diet. A blender is recommended to process a variety of foods. It may be difficult to consume the necessary amount of calories and protein in only three meals. Therefore, it is helpful to eat at least six times a day. Diet supplements such as Ensure or Carnation Instant Breakfast at least twice a day may be helpful.

Activity

Upon returning home, activity should be minimized and quiet rest, with the head elevated, is recommended. Do not plan to return to work immediately. You should only participate in non-contact activities. You will have appointments so that the doctor can ensure that you are healing properly.