

# **Galleria Oral and Maxillo-Facial Surgery Center**

## **Dr. Alexander V. Antipov**

### **POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

The following information is provided to ensure that many details regarding postoperative care are covered prior to your surgical procedure. This helps ensure a smooth and uneventful recovery. It has been our experience that the more information and preparation patients have prior to their surgery; the more easily they are able to manage their postoperative care.

There are several aspects of your postoperative care which will require special attention. These areas of concern are listed below in the sequence with which you will have to manage them after your surgery. The following topics will be covered: Swelling · Splint use and jaw opening · Fluids/Drinking · Medication · Diet · Hygiene · Activity · Work/School · Bleeding/Swelling.

### **SWELLING**

It is difficult to predict what you will remember immediately following surgery. You may remember waking up in the recovery room or you may not recall this event and only remember waking up in your room. Regardless, be assured that there will be experienced and caring nurses and staff to attend to your needs. When you awake, you may have some concerns. You will likely have a small oxygen mask placed over your face; this is routine. If you have some fluids in your mouth or stuffiness in your nose, this will be removed with a small suction tube.

Remember, your jaws will be held together with elastics, not wires. Many of these things can cause you to feel uncomfortable or even panicky. Remember to remain calm and listen to the doctor and staff for you are in no danger. Your jaws are not wired together and usually you will be able to open your jaws against the force of the elastics. However, we would prefer that you don't. Resting your jaw will help minimize swelling and is an important part of the healing process.

You will be positioned with your head elevated. This will also help minimize swelling. This "head up" position should be used for the first seven to ten days. Expect the peak of your swelling to occur four to five days after surgery and approximately 75% should be gone seven to ten days afterwards. In the hospital, the bed will be bent in the middle to prevent you from sliding to the foot of the bed. At home, propping up your mattress at the head of the bed and under the foot of the bed will help also. Spending a lot of time in a "Lazy Boy" or recliner type chair is an excellent alternative. Remember, keeping your head above the level of your heart is what helps reduce and minimize swelling.

Postoperative swelling varies significantly from patient to patient. In the hospital, several aids will be used to help minimize your swelling. Medications will be administered and an Aqua Cool Compression Device is recommended for use 22 hours a day for approximately one week. Nasal swelling and stuffiness can also be a concern after upper jaw surgery. These symptoms tend worsen four to five days after surgery and then gradually improve. Using a nasal spray and gently cleaning your nose with Q-Tips and hydrogen peroxide will bring some relief. One week after surgery, warm packs should be applied to the face to help increase blood supply and reduce swelling; speeding the resolution of discoloration associated with bruising. If bruising occurs it will be evident four to five days after surgery.

Just a word regarding your jaw surgery and safety; first, the elastics can be easily removed by either you or a family member. In the unlikely event vomiting occurs, it is more important to position yourself properly than to try to take the elastics off. If you are sick, position yourself over a basin or toilet bowl and let the fluids pass between the spaces of your teeth and out of your nose. You will not choke. There is no need for you to take a wire cutter home with you.

## **DRINKING**

Following jaw surgery there is frequently some numbness in the upper or lower lip, or both. When this is combined with facial swelling and soreness due to incisions inside the mouth, a task as basic as drinking may present difficulties. There are several tips which may help you:

- You should be drinking a fair amount of fluid after jaw surgery. Daily amounts should be between two to three liters. Fruit juices are an excellent source of fluid, especially apple juice. This is a major goal after surgery. The most frequent cause for a delay in discharge from the hospital is a lack of adequate fluid intake. Always have some fluids in front of you and drink frequently to consume two to three liters in 24 hours. The nurses will be encouraging you to drink early.
- Attempt to drink from feeding bottle or Sippy cup if possible. Place a small towel under your chin if necessary and place a small amount of fluid in your feeding bottle. Tip your head back slightly while pouring in the fluid slowly, a little at a time. Close the lips together and swallow. If you have difficulty with this, then try doing it in front of the bathroom mirror over the sink. You will find this gets easier the more times you drink.
- Diet timeline:
  - 1) First 2 weeks is full time elastics. Removal of elastics permitted only in office. Diet is full liquid particle free as in Ensure, Boost or particle free Jamba Juice.
  - 2) The next 6 weeks\*\* with full time elastics, you will be able to remove the elastics three times per day for diet, exercise, and hygiene. Diet is non-chewing which means any food that you can squash with your tongue and swallow without chewing.
  - 3) At three months, you will have functional elastics which mean you can speak and talk with the elastics on and your diet is soft.
  - 4) At four months\*\*\*, you may return to normal diet and exercise.
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- \*\* Single jaw surgery may have an accelerated dietary program
- \*\*\* Patients with multi-segment LeForte must pass torque testing to return to normal diet after three months
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**REMEMBER: TAKING ADEQUATE AMOUNTS OF FLUIDS IS ESSENTIAL FOLLOWING SURGERY**

## **MEDICATIONS**

Several medications will be used around the time of your surgery. Antibiotics will be given during your hospital stay through the intravenous. Pain medication will also be given after your surgery. In the first 24 hours following your surgery, the pain medication will be administered through intravenous. It must be emphasized that this route of administration is only used while you have the intravenous, which is approximately 24 hours. We always encourage you to use oral pain medication as soon as possible as this will expedite your discharge from the hospital

and allow for a smoother transition. Upon your discharge from the hospital, your pain medication will be in pill form. In general, there is less pain than most would anticipate with this surgery. This is due to the dysfunction of the sensory nerve in the areas of surgery which minimizes your ability to feel discomfort. You will be given both a liquid pain medication and a stronger pill form. Fine the medication form that suits you best.

### **JAW JOINT PAIN**

It is possible to experience some pain or pressure in or around your jaw joint after jaw surgery. This may feel somewhat like an earache. This pain or pressure will usually disappear within 2 to 3 weeks. If the pain medication is not taking the pain away, let Dr. Antipov know and an anti-inflammatory medication may be prescribed. The new position of your jaw is the cause of pressure in the jaw joint area.

### **JAW OPENING**

Since jaw surgery causes soreness in the muscles and bones of your face, you will find some difficulty in moving your jaw normally after surgery. We do not recommend any specific exercises during the first week or ten days after your surgery. Simply attempting to move your jaw side to side and opening slightly when you have your elastics off may help increase your jaw movement.

### **TEN DAYS TO FOUR WEEKS AFTER SURGERY**

During the ten day to four week period after surgery, stand in front of the mirror and open and close your jaw three to four times a day when your elastics are off. A good time to do this is after you have eaten and cleaned your mouth. At this point you should be able to get one finger in between your teeth. By four weeks after surgery you should be able to get two fingers in between your teeth. **DO NOT USE FINGER PRESSURE ON YOUR TEETH TO HELP STRETCH YOUR JAW OPENING AT THIS TIME.** Your jaw is weakest ten days following your surgery. Simply move your jaw forward and backward, and side to side, and open and close, while attempting to stretch your jaw muscles. Moist heat placed on the side of your face before and during these exercises may make them more comfortable and effective.

### **FOUR TO EIGHT WEEKS AFTER SURGERY**

During the fourth to eight weeks after surgery, you should be able to get two fingers between your front teeth very comfortably. Near the eighth week, you should be able to approach placing three fingers between the front teeth. At the sixth week you can begin using **GENTLE** finger pressure between the front teeth on each side to help gently stretch your jaw muscles, increasing your opening.

### **HYGIENE**

As with any surgical wound, it is extremely important for you to keep all areas inside your mouth clean after surgery. You should brush your teeth and rinse your mouth each time after you eat. Since you will most likely be eating small meals five or six times a day, you will need to clean your teeth at each of these intervals. Clean and Rinse your mouth with Peridex thru your Water Pik device at least 3x daily. Brush your teeth as usual, although it may be necessary to brush more frequently initially. The incision sites are above the gumline so brushing your teeth will not be a problem. Unless otherwise instructed, your splint and elastics should be worn at all times.

During the first week after surgery, be careful to make sure that while brushing your teeth the bristles of the brush stay on or very near the teeth and braces. You may have some soreness and difficulty opening your mouth, which may prevent you from brushing the inside of your teeth. This probably will improve with time and you should be able to accomplish this without difficulty within the first week to ten days after surgery. A small toothbrush will help make oral hygiene less difficult.

**REMEMBER:** The importance of cleaning your teeth and mouth cannot be overemphasized. This must be done several times each day to keep the mouth and incision sites clean. This will help the wounds heal quickly without getting an infection.

## **EATING**

In the past, but very unusual at the present time, teeth were wired together after jaw surgery. This allows the bones to heal while they are being held still. In the majority of cases today, we use small bone plates and screws to hold the bones still to assist in healing. Support is also given by the splint and elastic traction. This allows the jaw to move and function during the healing period of 8-12 weeks. It must be remembered, however, that the bones are not completely healed and are being stabilized only by the screws and plates. Therefore, we encourage a gradual progression of movement and use of the jaws, keeping in mind that adequate healing does not take place until approximately 8-12 weeks. **REMEMBER:** Your jaws are weakest at ten days.

Initially, it will be difficult to eat adequate amounts of food in only three meals per day. Try to eat five or six times a day, eating smaller portions each time. The following guidelines may be of help to you:

### **IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY TO DAY 10:**

During this period the diet should be essentially non-chewing. This will minimize the stress on the plates and screws. This may consist of either blenderized food or fluids that don't require chewing. This can include soups, milkshakes, baby food, or any blenderized food. Some sort of diet supplement such as Ensure, Sustecal or similar substitute may be used once or twice a day to increase calorie intake. Plenty of clear fluids, water, etc. will help clean the thicker fluids from your mouth and throat. **REMEMBER:** It is very important to eat as much as possible to help your wounds heal properly.

### **DAY 10 TO DAY 28 AFTER SURGERY:**

Food during this period does not need to be liquid. It can consist of soft foods that require non-chewing. This can consist of mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs, soft pasta that is cut into small pieces, soft rice dishes, or soft sandwiches that are cut into small pieces. One can also eat the foods that were eaten during the initial period. Chewing can start during this period of time.

### **FOUR WEEKS TO EIGHT WEEKS AFTER SURGERY**

At this point, chewing can be attempted. The food must be initially soft, progressing into softer meats such as hamburger and soft chicken. The portions should be small so as not to place too much force on the healing bones. Soft fish dishes are also excellent. You will find that your jaw will tire easily. This will continue for the first two to three months until your jaw muscles have accommodated for your new jaw position. Avoid eating food which requires chewing for prolonged periods of time.

## **RETURNING TO WORK**

It will typically take seven to ten days of recovery before returning to work or school. This period may be shorter or longer in certain cases. You feel somewhat tired after your jaw surgery initially, but with good nutrition your energy level will soon return to normal. **REMEMBER: IT TAKES SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS FOR INITIAL HEALING OF YOUR JAW OR JAWS AND THREE TO FOUR MONTHS FOR A FULL BODY HEALING.** If the jaw is hit or bumped early after your surgery, this may cause some shifting in the jaw and bite, **SO BE CAREFUL!**

## **PHYSICAL EXERCISE**

You can resume light physical exercise as soon as your swelling has mostly subsided following your surgery. You should **NOT** participate in any exercise or sports that may involve hitting your jaw. These will include **ALL CONTACT SPORTS, ANY SPORT INVOLVING A BALL, OR OTHER AGGRESSIVE SPORTS.** You can resume light aerobic exercise, as soon as your swelling has mostly subsided. Do not clench or stress your jaw muscles with heavy lifting or activity.

## **BLEEDING**

It is normal to experience some bleeding from the mouth for the first 7-10 days after jaw surgery. This should not, however, be excessive. It will usually stop within a few minutes. With upper jaw surgery you may experience some old blood from the nose for the first week after surgery. This will usually happen as you stand or bend over. If bleeding is more than just a slow oozing, go immediately to the nearest emergency room and have them contact Dr. Antipov or Alpha. This, by the way, is very rare.

## **X-RAYS**

X-rays will be required after your surgery. These will be typically done within the first few days after your surgery, then at orthodontic completion.

We hope that these postoperative instructions have been helpful for you. We encourage all patients to read these instructions at least once prior to surgery and keep them on hand for reference during the first week after their surgical procedure. We would also encourage family and friends who are involved in your care to read these instructions as this will help them make educated decisions regarding your care. Please contact our office at any time with questions that are not clarified in this pamphlet.