

Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Discharge advice following jaw osteotomy

You have had a jaw osteotomy. Immediately after the operation your face will be swollen, feel tight and swallowing can be difficult.

Diet

Even though you can open your mouth a small amount, you must refrain from chewing for approximately eight weeks.

For the first four weeks anything liquidized is acceptable. You may also have any foods that are soft enough to be swallowed without chewing. For example, soups, scrambled eggs, ice cream, yogurt, jelly and pasta that is soft and well chopped. You will be given a liquid diet sheet. If you have not received one please ask staff for a copy.

You may then introduce a soft diet for the remaining four weeks. High-calorie, high-protein meals are the best with plenty of liquids. This may require eating a small meal five to six times a day rather than three large meals. You may be discharged from hospital with Fortisips but you can also buy some supplemental nutritional drinks such as Complan or Build-UP from your chemist.

As well as using a cup or a children's beaker which controls liquid flow at meal times you might find using a 20ml or 50ml plastic syringe with a plastic quill or straw helpful to squirt liquids into the mouth.

Weight

During your healing period, you may experience some weight loss. This is because the character of your diet has changed and your appetite may not be what it was before your surgery. Your appetite will return and your weight will stabilise once your dietary intake has returned to normal.



Patient Information

Oral Hygiene

Get back to your usual oral hygiene routine as soon as possible, preferably the day after your operation. Use a very small amount of toothpaste with a soft small headed (baby) toothbrush. You will be discharged with Corsodyl mouth wash. Please use this as directed. A good oral hygiene technique and the use of Corsodyl mouthwash will limit your risk of any infection.

Medication

You will be discharged with antibiotics and pain medication. Please use these as directed. These should all be supplied in liquid form. Some medications can cause nausea or stomach problems. If you are affected, consult your surgeon.

Elastics

Elastics are small rubber bands used to retrain chewing muscles after surgery. These should be worn at all times. Your consultant will show you how to replace these yourself at home after the first week.

Activities

Take it easy for the first week following your surgery. When your normal routine resumes, avoid activities that might cause an injury to the face like football or netball.

Nausea/Vomiting

Don't panic. Lay in a face down position to allow fluids to drain out of your mouth. Contact the senior house officer (SHO) on call on Ward 32 if you are worried.

Return to work

Depending on the type of work you do, you may need to refrain from work for two to four weeks. Your GP will supply you with sick notes.

Miscellaneous

- Use ice packs (such as Kool Pak) on your face for 48 hours. Your swelling will maximise three days after surgery and may take weeks to completely resolve.

Patient Information

- Sleep with your head raised on two to three pillows for three to five days.
- Use lots of good quality lip balm to avoid drying and chapping.

Things to look out for

- **Bleeding:** some oozing from inside your mouth or from your nose at night after having your operation is normal and to be expected. Significant bleeding is very unusual. If it happens, it can usually be stopped by applying pressure with a rolled up handkerchief or swab over the area for at least ten minutes.
- **Numbness:** your bottom lip will be numb or tingly after the operation, similar to the sensation of having an injection at the dentist. This numbness may take several months to disappear and in a minority of patients may be permanent.
- **Infection:** the small plates and screws that hold your jaw in its new position are usually left in place permanently. Occasionally they can become infected and need to be removed. If this happens, it is not normally a problem until several months after surgery.
- **Adjustment** of the bite in the weeks following surgery is often necessary. You may have to wear elastic bands on your orthodontic braces to guide your bite into its final position. Rarely, a second small operation may be required to reposition the fixing plates and screws.

Will I need a follow up appointment?

A follow up appointment will be made for one to two weeks after your operation. This will be sent to you by post.

If you experience problems contact:

If you have any concerns contact Ward 32 and ask for the maxillofacial doctor on call for advice. Telephone: 024 7696 7831, 024 7696 7830 or 024 7696 5238

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6500 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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