



The following is a general list of answers to questions most frequently asked. These comments are not intended to cover every aspect of your postoperative care, since each person may differ in the course of healing and that operation is individualized for each patient. If you have any questions regarding your post-op care, please call our office during weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Urgent or emergency calls will be answered at any time by phoning (972) 566-6555 or (800) 344-4068.

### **Jaw Surgery, “IMF” or Patients with Immobile Jaws**

1. The anesthesiologist will call you the night before surgery to give you any pre-op instructions regarding eating and drinking.
2. Your mouth will be swollen, and for the first 24 hours you will most likely ooze some blood from your mouth incisions. You will need to sleep elevated in the bed on 2-3 pillows to help reduce some of the swelling. Also, for several weeks, expect some numbness in your lips and gums.
3. You will have brackets, elastics and/or wires attached to your teeth, and most likely a plastic splint. These devices are for stabilization of your jaws or teeth to promote healing, proper alignment, and protect the surgery site. The need for splinting will vary and will be discussed PRIOR to surgery. Oral hygiene promotes healing and is extremely important. Please RINSE YOUR MOUTH AFTER EVERY MEAL, and after 3 to 4 days you may begin to use the waterpik on LOW to clean your teeth and splint. Be sure to avoid the incisions in your gums. At your first post-op appointment, your doctor will inform you when you may begin to gently brush your teeth.
4. Diet is a very important part of your post-op care. For at least the first six weeks after surgery, you may have LIQUIDS ONLY. The doctor will instruct you as to when you may progress to a NO CHEW diet and how long you will remain on this. If you would like to order a NO CHEW cookbook, we have the information available through our office. We also have one for diet suggestions. It is very important to remain on a NO CHEW diet to give the bone grafted area and/or jaws time to heal. Excessive movement of this area can impair the healing process.
5. You will receive a prescription for PERIDEX, which is a mouthwash for rinsing several times a day. We recommend using the Peridex for 7-10 days post-op. After that, we recommend you rinse with salt water, half-and-half peroxide and water, or half-and-half mouthwash and water. Both Peridex and salt water encourage healing and aid in keeping the bacteria in your mouth to a minimum. It is very important to USE these rinses. You should ALWAYS rinse after every meal.
6. You will be on antibiotics for a minimum of five days after surgery. Please take the medicine at prescribed times until it is finished. It is very important to take the medicine to prevent infection.
7. The stitches in your mouth are a special kind which dissolve. They require no special care except to keep them clean. It is very important, once again, to keep your mouth clean to prevent bacteria from sticking to the stitches.



8. You will miss a minimum of two weeks of school. You can return to school when you feel up to it, usually after two or three weeks. Don't forget to pack a liquid lunch, and to bring your mouthwash from home.
9. When you return to school, you can resume normal activities, except for physical education classes. No contact sports are allowed for three (3) months. If you need documentation for the school, we would be glad to give you a written excuse. Absolutely NO SWIMMING until the doctor says you can.
10. Your first appointment in the office will be 1-2 weeks post-op. At this time, the doctor will check the progress of the surgery, and give you any other instruction necessary for further healing.
11. Before leaving the hospital, be sure to find out where the incisions are in order to avoid them during the early days of healing.
12. You may be sent home with a pair of wire cutters. Your surgeon will explain the purpose of the cutters before you leave the hospital.

**After returning home from the hospital:**

1. Remember to sleep with your head elevated on 2-3 pillows. This will help reduce some of the swelling.
2. Your lips will be very dry. You can apply Vaseline or Carmex frequently to prevent further chapping.
3. Don't forget to take your antibiotics on schedule and until all of the medication is finished.
4. You may begin to waterpik on low speed. It is imperative to maintain excellent oral hygiene to prevent bacteria from growing in your mouth. Please be careful to avoid the incisions in your gums.
5. The sutures in your mouth will take quite a while to fall out. Do not be surprised if they are still there at three months post-op. If you spit some of these out, understand this is normal and not something to worry about.
6. Stay as quiet and relaxed as possible. You may get up to move around the house, but no lifting or moving heavy objects. Keep your head above your heart. NO BENDING OVER for the first 10 days.
7. Post-op depression is not uncommon after any type of surgery. Such depression is usually related to the immediate post-op discomfort anxiety over appearance (swelling and bruising), and limitations on activity and socializing. These feelings will disappear as your appearance improves and you return to your usual activity.

**Liquid Diet and Some Suggestions to Make it Easier:**

- A good blender is a must.



- A waterpik is a must.
- Au Jus Gravy mix, bouillon or consommé may be used in the prepared form to add flavor and liquid to blended food.
- Remember flavor and aroma will be extremely important since normal appearance of foods will be greatly changed. Do not hesitate to experiment with different spices. However, avoid seasonings that may cause irritation, such as green pepper and hot sauce.
- When preparing seafood, remember it must be eaten the same day it is prepared.
- Recipes containing raw egg should be refrigerated and consumed within 24 hours.
- It is recommended you test food temperature to avoid burning your mouth due to post-op numbness of the lips.