

# Post-Operative Instructions

## after Jaw Surgery



Liberty  
Oral & Facial Surgery  
Bryan W. McLelland, DDS

### Immediately upon arriving home:

**Head Elevation:** Lay down and rest with your head elevated at approximately 30° with 2 pillows or in a recliner. We recommend resting and sleeping in that position as much as possible for the first week after surgery.

**Dressings:** Any bandages or dressings in place, are left in place unless otherwise instructed. We will remove them at your next visit.

**Ice Packs:** Please keep the ice packs over the surgical site for the first 24-48 hours for 20 min. on and 20 min. off. For upper jaw surgery the ice packs are laid across the bridge of the nose and on the cheeks. For lower jaw surgery the ice pack is placed along the side of the lower jaw on both sides. A bag of frozen peas or corn can be rotated in and out of the freezer and will adapt nicely to the surgical sites and work well.

**Bleeding:** Most jaw surgery patients will have bleeding and oozing from the surgical sites for the first 24-48 hours. Upper jaw and nasal procedures will have more bleeding and oozing than lower jaw procedures. Nose bleeds should be expected with upper jaw surgery and can happen with lower jaw surgery as well from the breathing tube used with anesthesia. Sometimes nasal packs are placed and should only be removed at your postoperative appointment unless otherwise directed. Any bleeding that is uncontrolled or excessive is not normal and requires evaluation by our office immediately.

**Swelling:** Ice packs will minimize the degree of swelling that takes place after the surgery. The swelling you will experience is dependent on the length of the surgery, type of surgery, complexity of the surgical procedures and individual patient responses to surgery. Swelling will typically increase for 72 hours and will taper and diminish over the next 7-10 days.

**Bruising:** Bruising will begin to appear approximately 3-5 days after the surgical procedures. Upper jaw surgical procedures will have a tendency for more bruising, redness and color presentation around the nose and below the eyes. Typically the bruising persists and expands over 7-14 day.

**Diet:** Begin with clear liquids and advance to juices such as grape juice, apple juice and sport drinks. Once those fluids are tolerated, you may progress to soft cool foods such as milk shakes, pudding, yogurt, ice cream and protein shakes [eg. Isagenix]. The day after the surgery you may add warm soft foods such as soups, well cooked pasta, rice and other non chew foods. The use of straws should be avoided for 3 weeks. Avoid drinking carbonated beverages during the first week. Use the feeding tube and syringe for the first week after surgery. The feeding tube and syringe system will be shown to you by your recovery nurse and night nurse. A specialized book with successful recipes will be provided to help with the feeding process after your surgery.

**Oral Hygiene:** Please do not disrupt the surgical site(s) the day of your procedure. You can begin brushing your teeth with a soft toothbrush the day after your surgery. Small amounts of bleeding are normal when brushing teeth for the first week after surgery.

No rinsing of the mouth should be performed for the first 12 hours after surgery. After 12 hours it is important to rinse the surgical site(s) very gently with warm salt water (1 tablespoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water) after meals for the first 2-4 weeks.

Do not rinse vigorously or probe the surgical site(s) with your tongue, fingers or any other objects.

#### Post Falls

602 N. Calgary Court, Ste 202 | Post Falls, ID 83854  
P 208-262-2660 F 509.344.1113  
bwmddsinfo@gmail.com

#### Dr Bryan W McLelland, DDS, DSC

Board Certified in the United States  
Board Certified in Canada  
Board Certified in Dental Anesthesia

#### Spokane Valley

507 N. Sullivan, Ste 120 | Spokane Valley, WA 99037  
P 509.922.2273 F 509.344.1113  
www.drbyanmclelland.com

# Post-Operative Instructions

## after Jaw Surgery Continued



**Oral Hygiene Continued:** Do not use a straw or any other device that would create pressure in your mouth for the first 3 weeks.

It is advised that you refrain from smoking for at least 1 week after you surgery. The negative pressure that is caused by smoking cigarettes, along with the nicotine, is very detrimental to the healing process.

Commercial mouth rinse and oral disinfectants should not be used unless prescribed.

### Day After Surgery

**Activity:** Stay upright as much as possible and rest and sleep at a 30° angle in a recliner or a bed for the first 72 hours after surgery. Avoid bending over, or lifting heavy objects for 2-3 weeks following the surgery. Avoid unnecessary activity for the first 72 hours other than short walks several times per day. Longer walks maybe started after the first 3 days. Patient should avoid running and lifting more than 30 pounds until 6 weeks after surgery. Patient should avoid any contact sports or potential jaw injuries or trauma for 8-10 weeks.

**Work/School:** Most patients are able to return to school and work activities 7- 10 days after surgery. Patient should consider returning to work/school halftime for the first several days before attempting a full schedule.

**Bathing:** Avoid extremely hot showers and extremely hot baths for the first 2 days. Avoid heavy shower or shower spray on surgical sites. If prescribed, topical antibiotic ointment should be reapplied on the facial incisions immediately before and after bathing.

***Please report any of the following to our office immediately:***

1. Excessive pain or excessive bleeding.
2. Itching or rash around the surgical sites or rashes secondary to any medications.
3. Temperature above 101° orally.
4. Excessive swelling or bruising.
5. Excessive fatigue or depression.

Please do not hesitate to call our office at any time, day or night with any questions or concerns. Thank you again for selecting Liberty Oral and Facial Surgery for your surgical care.

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info@drbryanmclelland.com

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