



TMJ ARTHROPLASTY (OPEN JOINT) AND PROSTHETIC JOINT POSTOP INSTRUCTIONS

Wound care

Dr. Mueller will remove your dressing after 48 hours unless he instructs you to do so. Use ice packs on your face for 72 hours. Do not shower if you have a dressing on. Once the dressing is removed, keep the wound clean and dry for five days. You can shower as long as the wounds stay dry. On the 6th day, you may get it wet but be careful to pat dry and not rub the wound. If you have sutures, you may clean the sutures only with a cotton swab and a solution of ½ hydrogen peroxide and ½ water. A small amount of watery drainage, bruising, and redness may be noted. Keep a thin coating of antibiotic ointment on the surgical sites. (Polysporin, Bacitracin).

Keep your head elevated, at least 30 degrees, to minimize swelling.

The side/sides of the TMJ surgical site will be numb. This may in some cases be permanent. This location is approx. 3cm in front of the ear up to the height of the hairline. This is a known risk of open TMJ surgery and is predictable to occur post surgery.

Ambulation

Although you just had surgery, we recommend you do not stay in bed while awake to minimize the chances of leg clots. Try to transfer to a chair instead and walk throughout the house. Try to be as active as possible.

The swelling will worsen over the next 3-4 days after surgery and is expected. The swelling will begin to subside over the next few days.



Foods

On the first day, eat easy to swallow cooler foods and lots of liquids. On the Second day, warm soft foods. Keep hydrated by drinking at least 8-9 glasses of liquids a day. A soft diet is recommended for the first 3 months after surgery. After 3 months you may slowly expand your diet. Avoid foods that hurt your jaw, such as raw vegetables, and whole apples. You should avoid practices such as cracking nuts, chewing on ice, gum or food that causes discomfort or repetitive motion. Dr. Mueller will advance your diet accordingly after that.

It is highly desirable that you do not smoke for at least 2-3 weeks following the surgery, please be aware that smoking has a systemic effect and a history of smoking can jeopardize the overall success of your surgery.

Pain control

NSAID's should be taken first. Ibuprofen or Motrin, 600-800 mg, every 8 hours for three days can be taken to keep the pain under control. If necessary, you would obtain additional relief by taking narcotic medication as instructed. You should have a prescription for pain relief given to you at the pre-surgical appointment at our office.

Sutures

Dr. Mueller will remove your stitches in about 7-10 days following surgery.

Exercises

You may have been given instructions for post-operative exercises during your pre surgical appointment. Do the exercises as directed.

Bleeding

Bleeding and drainage are uncommon. If bleeding occurs, apply pressure over the area with a gauze for approximately 30 minutes. Reapply if necessary. Call the office if this maneuver does not control the bleeding.



Changes in occlusion (bite)

It is not uncommon for the occlusion or “bite” to feel slightly “out”. This will gradually settle over about ten days and relates to swelling within the joint. For patients who have undergone joint replacement surgery it may be necessary for elastics to be used to hold the jaws together for a few days to help the bite settle. You will be supplied with small cutter and clips to help insert and remove the elastics. For patients who have had a TMJ disectomy bite changes may be more pronounced and sometimes permanent. If bite changes do not resolve, occlusal adjustment and/or dental procedures may need to be performed.

Hearing changes

Patients may occasionally notice some deafness or decrease in hearing in the ear on the operated side. This is usually related to some fluid/blood clot in the ear canal and also some swelling following the surgery, as the surgical incision involves dissection near the ear canal. This deafness will gradually subside over 10-14 days. If decreased hearing persists notify the doctor.