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## **Orthognathic Surgery Postop Instructions**

These instructions are intended to help you reduce postoperative pain, swelling and any possible complications. We may make additional recommendations, depending on your specific circumstances. If you have questions, please feel free to ask.

**MEDICATIONS...** You will have several medications prescribed to you. It is important to take each medication properly. Instructions for the proper taking of each medication are listed on each bottle. Taking pain medications in excess of recommended dosages increases the risk of side effects and usually does not improve effectiveness.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY...** Restrict physical activities for the period that your doctor recommends. Physical activity increases heart rate and blood pressure, which may cause bleeding, increased pain and swelling. In addition, it is important you avoid physical activities that might expose you to trauma to your face and jaws, resulting in displacement of jaw segments and the need for further surgery. Heavy lifting and associated clenching of the jaws may also cause displacement of jaw segments and should be avoided.

**DIET...** Maintain a non-chewing diet for six weeks after your surgery. At the same time, maintaining adequate nutrition is important for good healing. Food that you can blend and swallow without chewing is appropriate. One strategy many patients use is to have a staple food such as Carnation Instant Breakfast or Slim Fast at every meal to ensure adequate vitamins and calories. Then add another food for variety, to try at every meal. Frequently, some part of your face will be numb after surgery; so it is important to take care when eating foods that are hot and to be careful when chewing.

**SWELLING AND PAIN...** Besides the prescribed medications, an ice pack may be helpful in reducing pain and swelling. If you lie down, keep your head elevated on pillows. After 48 hours, you should switch from the ice pack to a heating pad or hot water bottle instead. This will help bring down the swelling. At 3-5 days after your surgery, you may notice dark red or brown drainage coming from the incisions. This represents the breakdown of the blood clot near the surgical site and is normal. If you notice any green, yellow or white drainage, you should contact us.

**PERSONAL HYGIENE...** You may brush your teeth beginning the day after surgery. Initially, avoid toothpaste and simply use a toothbrush and warm water. Brush after each meal, staying on the teeth and surrounding gums. Avoid the incision sites. After brushing, if applicable, use the prescribed oral rinse as directed. You should begin rinsing your mouth with warm salt water numerous times per day beginning the day after surgery. You may begin showering or bathing the day after surgery. Inhaling the steam can help clear your nose if it feels congested. Skin incisions are not harmed by moisture. If you



have a tape dressing on your chin, you can get this wet. After your shower or bath, pat the chin dressing dry with a towel and apply antimicrobial ointment to any skin incisions

**TOBACCO USE...** Do not smoke or chew tobacco for as long as possible. Smoke and other foreign material in the mouth cause irritation of the surgical wounds and increased pain. Also, nicotine and the other drugs in cigarettes cause constriction of blood vessels and delayed healing.