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After Orthognathic Surgery

1. Facial swelling will increase for the first 48-72 hours. Apply ice packs (protect your skin with a thin towel or wash cloth) and keep the head elevated. Packaged frozen peas make an ice pack that adapts well to the contours of the face. Most of the swelling will resolve within the first few weeks. Resolution of the remaining swelling may take several months.
2. Bruising may occur after a few days. The bruising may sometimes extend onto the upper chest.
3. Nasal congestion and minor nosebleed is expected if you have had upper jaw surgery. You may “sniff back” or wipe, but do not blow your nose. You may use a saline nasal spray to loosen clots and mucous. A non-prescription nasal decongestant spray may be used for severe congestion, but overuse will increase the congestion.
4. Brush the teeth gently with a small soft bristle toothbrush. You may use toothpaste. Your upper gums will have reduced sensation if you have had upper jaw surgery. Be careful not to injure the gums while brushing.
5. You may use a mouth rinse.
6. While jaw motion is restricted during the first one to two post-operative weeks, meals may include liquids such as juice, broth, milk products (including Lactaid, soy, rice products), and meal replacement drinks. It is generally easier to sip directly from a cup. This may seem difficult at first, but with some practice it will become easier. Your surgeon will advise you when it is safe to advance to a blended diet of pudding, yogurt, Jello, and a variety of meals of similar consistency. You should try to have 4-6 meals a day to be sure that you are receiving ample nutrition and hydration. Your surgeon will advise you when it is safe to begin chewing.
7. No smoking.
8. You may shower, but if there are external dressings they must be kept dry. They may be replaced with a small Band-Aid if necessary.
9. If your teeth are rubber banded together, limit your jaw motion until you have been instructed to begin jaw motion exercises. The rubber bands may be cut with scissors in the very unlikely event of a true breathing emergency (notify your surgeon afterward).
10. Please notify your doctor if you feel that your bite has shifted.
11. Postoperative medications must only be taken as prescribed. You should not drive if you are taking narcotic pain medication.
12. Light activity is acceptable, even good. Try to be out of bed during the daytime.
13. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact our office at 818-993-5700 during regular office hours, and 818-825-0140 after-hours.