

Repair of Facial Fractures Post-Op Instructions

Overview:

You have had a “repair of facial fractures” - a procedure whereby the bones of the facial skeleton are put into their correct position and sometimes held in place with wires, plates, or screws. This is done through tiny incisions hidden on your face or sometimes inside the mouth.

After Surgery:

Swelling and bleeding are very common after this procedure, and bruising can last for several weeks. Sometimes your eyes can swell shut and sometimes your bite can feel “off”, but these both improve with time. It is also common to have blood in the nose and sinuses causing congestion, and to have areas of the face that are numb or tingly. If this is daycare surgery you will need a responsible adult to take you home and stay with you that night.

Incision Care:

General care: Avoid putting any pressure on the surgical area, especially the nose, cheekbones, or forehead, as it is quite easy to shift the small bones of the face before they can heal. You should avoid blowing your nose and try sneezing with your mouth open if your surgery involves your sinuses.

Incision care: Apply a very small amount of antibiotic ointment available over the counter at the pharmacy to incisions. You may shower after 48 hours.

Oral care: If you have incisions in your mouth, rinse regularly with salt water and use the prescribed chlorhexidine mouthwash as directed. You should not eat anything hard for 2 weeks.

MMF: If your upper and lower jaw have been wired shut or held together with elastics, you need to be on a blenderized or pureed diet until advanced by your surgeon, typically 4 weeks.

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Activity and Care at Home:

Keep your head elevated above your heart with extra pillows while sleeping or lying down and use ice packs for the first few days to help bring down the swelling. You want to avoid working out or strenuous activity, or any “head-down” activity like heavy lifting or straining as this can increase bleeding.

You should contact your surgeon’s office to arrange follow-up for:

- Removable sutures - 7 days
- Dissolving sutures - 7-14 days
- Removal of MMF

Do not do any activity that hurts or causes pain at your surgery site. A more formal physical therapy program can start after your initial post-operative visit, usually 2 weeks after surgery.

Pain Management:

You will have freezing that lasts 1-8 hours that helps with your pain control. To manage pain, take Ibuprofen (Advil) and plain Tylenol every 6 hours for the first 48 hours. If that is not sufficient, then take the prescription medication. Do not take more Tylenol or ibuprofen than is recommended on the bottle in 24 hours. You can refer to the pain management handout. Generally, you will have pain for 24-48 hours then it should decrease significantly. A cool gel pack may also help with the swelling.

IMPORTANT:

The surgery may be performed under general anaesthetic therefore must not operate motor vehicles, boats, power tools or machinery for the first 24 hours. You may resume driving once you have return of function and no longer require narcotic pain medication.

If you experience increasing rather than decreasing pain, bleeding not controlled with pressure, excessive swelling or bruising, increased swelling or redness around the wound, increased drainage from incisions or in your drains, foul odour, fever, chills, please call your surgeon's office. If you experience shortness of breath, or arm or leg pain, call 9-1-1 or visit your emergency department.