

Postoperative Instructions for TMJ Arthroscopy

Wound Care

1. After arthroscopy the wound may have a stitch in it and will be covered with a small Band-Aid or gauze dressing. This should be left in place for 24 hours. It is normal to see some bloody drainage on the dressings. If bright red blood persists despite elevation and icing, please call your surgeon. The dressing should be removed on the first or second day after surgery. Do not cut any of the visible sutures.
2. Wounds should be kept dry for 48 hours. You may take a bath, but do not submerge the wound in water. Showering is allowed after 48 hours, but do not scrub the area. Avoid pools until the sutures are removed.
3. Icing is very important for the first 5-7 days postoperative to reduce swelling. Ice should be applied for 20-minute periods 3-4 times per day. Care must be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin; it is recommended to place ice cubes in a lockable plastic bag and cover with a dry tea towel.
4. An upright position (head above the heart) for the first 3-4 days will also help reduce swelling.
5. A low-grade fever (100.5°F) is common in the first 24 hours.

Jaw Activity

1. Full jaw function is advised unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon.
2. Your diet should consist of soft foods (i.e. fish, pasta, scrambled eggs).
3. The anesthetic drugs used during your surgery may cause nausea for the first 24 hours. If nausea is encountered, drink only clear liquids (i.e. Sprite or 7-up). The only solids should be soft bread. If nausea and vomiting become severe or you show signs of dehydration (lack of urination, fainting or heart racing upon standing) please call your surgeon.
4. Range of motion exercises (maximum opening, and right and left jaw shifts for 10 seconds, 5 times in a row, with a 10 second rest between each) are encouraged for the first 7 days after surgery and are to be started the evening of surgery. It is normal to have discomfort during your exercises. While exercise is important, don't over-do it! Common sense is the rule.
5. Night-guards/bite splints should continue to be used.

Postoperative Pain

1. It is common for patients to encounter increased TMJ pain for up to 3 days after your surgery. This is when swelling peaks. Using the pain medication as directed will help control this. Taking pain medication before bedtime will assist in sleeping. It is important not to drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic medication (i.e. Percocet, Tylenol #3, Demerol, Dilaudid). You should resume your normal preoperative pain medication regimen 2-3 days after surgery.
2. Keep in mind that the use of narcotic pain medications can lead to constipation. A diet high in fiber, fluids, and walking can help prevent this.

Postoperative Appointment

1. Your surgeon will need to reexamine you 7-10 days after routine TMJ arthroscopy. Please call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment.

Postoperative Activities

1. Driving while under the influence of a narcotic medication is extremely dangerous and not advised.
2. Returning to school or work depends on the degree of postoperative pain and the demands of your job. Pain is generally an appropriate guide.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL:
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