

# DR. DALE M. GALLAGHER

## ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

DIPLOMATE, AMERICAN BOARD OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY SPECIALIZING IN ADULT  
AND PEDIATRIC CARE OF THE JAW AND FACIAL STRUCTURES

WISDOM TEETH - TMJ - DENTAL IMPLANTS - INJURIES - RECONSTRUCTION

PHONE: 512-258-1636  
FAX: 512-258-6352  
www.jawpain.com

12210 PECAN STREET  
AUSTIN, TX 78727

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS ORTHOGNATHIC SURGERY

Thank you for selecting our services for your oral health care needs. Some discomfort should be expected following oral surgery. To ensure the most comfortable and speedy recovery, we have put together some information to guide you through the next few days.

### REMINDERS

- **NO SMOKING** (THIS WILL DRASTICALLY SLOW YOUR HEALING PROCESS).
- **NO CARBONATED DRINKS** FOR AT LEAST 3 DAYS.
- **NO ALCOHOL** UNTIL ALL MEDICATIONS ARE FINISHED!!
- **UPPER JAW SURGERY ONLY – NASAL SPRAY – LEFT IN THE MORNING/RIGHT AT NIGHT.**
- **NO CHEWING, NO CHEWING, NO CHEWING!**
- **EXERCISE & DRINK LOTS OF WATER!**

### YOUR MOUTH WILL NOT BE WIRED SHUT

#### ☐ BLEEDING

Some bleeding or drainage from the nose should be expected for several days and is a normal healing process. **Do not blow your nose.** You may wipe nose gently to clean it and you can swab the inside edge of each nostril with Vaseline/antibiotic ointment to keep area moist. Dr. Gallagher will be happy to see you in our office daily if needed for remove excess drainage.

#### ☐ SWELLING

Swelling is a normal occurrence after surgery. Majority of swelling occurs on the second and third days after surgery. To minimize swelling, apply an ice pack to the area for up to 24 hours after surgery in intervals of 30 minutes "on" and 30 minutes "off". \*\* Remember that swelling is a natural healing process. It is your body's way of protecting the surgical area and bringing nutrition to the healing area.

#### ☐ BRUISING

In some instances, bruising can occur near the surgical site or around the neck or jaw. This is a normal, healthy response and there is nothing to be concerned about. It is your body's way of "recycling" red blood cells.

#### ☐ NUMBNESS

Local anesthesia is administered during surgery. The muscles used to swallow and breathe will be working normally; however, it may seem difficult to swallow because your skin surfaces may be numb. Expect sore throat from breathing tube, cold icy drinks help sooth this. Temporary numbness in your mouth, lips and face will last for several weeks and/or months. This is due to swelling putting pressure on nerves, as swelling goes down, the numbness will start decreasing.

#### ☐ DIET

**Any chewing WILL damage surgical site and prevent bones from healing!!!**

Drink plenty of fluids, enough so that your urine is clear. You will be on a minimum 3-month NO CHEW soft food diet or until instructed by Dr. Gallagher. Some soft food ideas are: ice cream, yogurt, pudding, protein milkshakes, overcooked pastas/vegetables, soups, macaroni and cheese, eggs, pancakes, mashed potatoes, ground meats, baked fish, chopped BBQ, etc. (Menus can be found – Soft Food Menu).

**No drinking through straws for the first 3 weeks after surgery or until instructed by Dr. Gallagher.**

#### ☐ SUTURES

The sutures used in the surgical site will dissolve on their own in 3-4 weeks. If you have areas of discomfort around the sutures please inform Dr. Gallagher. He will also "trim" the sutures as needed at your follow up appointments.

## ☐ SLEEPING

Sleep with your head slightly elevated the first night following surgery. Use an extra pillow. Then continue with your regular sleeping habits. You will not damage any area by sleeping on it.

## ☐ EXERCISE

Light to moderate exercise the day following surgery. Increasing circulation will also help reduce swelling and help you feel well. Get up, move around, take a shower, and participate in normal activities as much as possible. The quicker you get back into your regular routine the better you will feel.

## ☐ PRESCRIPTIONS

Prescriptions will be submitted the Monday before surgery. Please refer to "Medication Guideline" handout.

## ☐ RUBBER BANDS

You may be instructed to wear orthodontic rubber bands for a period of time following surgery to train your muscles into your new bite position. These will be worn 24/7 and removed only to eat or while brushing your teeth then replaced with new rubber bands. Each patient is different and will be instructed by Dr. Gallagher if and when bands will be needed and for what period of time.

## ☐ TEMPERATURE

Temperature elevation can occur following oral surgery. If your temperature rises above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, take a fever reducer such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) every 4-6 hours until the fever subsides. It is normal and expected for your mouth to feel warm after oral surgery.

## ☐ NASAL SPRAY- UPPER JAW SURGERY ONLY

### **DO NOT BLOW YOUR NOSE!!!!**

You will experience a congested/stuffy nose this first week following upper jaw surgery. Steamy showers help. This is part of the swelling/healing process and is normal. You will use Afrin spray once in the morning and once at night, alternating nostrils. **Spray the left side in the morning (2 sprays)** and the **right side at night (2 sprays)**. You may spray saline solution to rinse your nose as often as you desire.

**Do not submerge head under any body of water!!!**

## ☐ ORAL HYGIENE

Good oral hygiene is essential to good healing. You will start brushing and using prescribed chlorhexidine mouth rinse (*see instructions on Medication Guidelines handout*) the day after surgery. Warm salt rinses (teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water) can be used after meals to help keep area clean. Brush your teeth! Just be gentle with brushing the surgical areas. **Do not use electric toothbrushes or waterpik flossers until instructed by Dr. Gallagher.**

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