

# Corrective Jaw Surgery



Capital Health

# Corrective Jaw Surgery (Orthognathic Surgery)

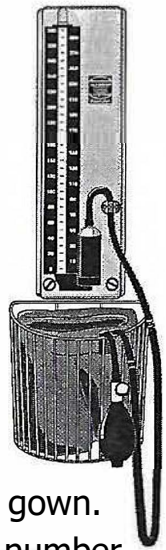
Corrective jaw surgery corrects jaw deformities. The correction of these deformities is needed to prevent destructive damage to your jaw joints, teeth and associated muscles. Corrective jaw surgery is also used to treat obstructive sleep apnea (OSA).

This pamphlet will help you learn what you can expect if you are having corrective jaw surgery.

## The Day of Surgery

- You will be asked to arrive at the hospital at least 1<sup>1/2</sup> hours before your operation. Go to the Same Day Surgery Unit on the 1Q<sup>th</sup> floor of the **Victoria Building, Victoria General**.
- **Do not** eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery. **Your surgery will be cancelled if you eat or drink after this time.** Nausea and vomiting are more likely to occur during or shortly after your operation.
- Stop smoking at least 24 hours before your operation. Smoking can make your recovery more difficult and can delay healing. Smoking is not allowed anywhere on the hospital grounds.
- Do not bring valuables to the hospital. The hospital is not responsible for them.

- The nurse will ask you several questions about your health and take your vital signs (temperature, blood pressure, pulse and respiration).
- Be sure to tell the nurse if you have any medication or food allergies.
- You may need blood tests.
- The oral surgeon will speak with you unless he/she has already done so.
- Please brush your teeth well before coming to the hospital. Do not swallow any water.
- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown.
- Please give the nurse the name and phone number of the individual you want contacted after your operation.



- **Note to those waiting:**  
Patients who are having jaw surgery are usually in the Operating Room and recovery area for 4-8 hours. The length of time depends on the type of surgery needed. At the end of the operation, the surgeon will contact a friend or family member when asked to do so by the patient.

## After Your Surgery

- You will be taken to the recovery area. You will remain here for 2-4 hours depending on the length of your surgery.
- The nurses will take your vital signs several times during your stay. This is normal.

- Medications have been ordered to make you comfortable, reduce the amount of swelling, prevent nausea and help with any nasal congestion you may have. These medications will be given through your intravenous (IV) until you are drinking well.
- Until you are steady on your feet, a nurse will help you to the bathroom.
- Facial swelling will increase over 3 days and will then gradually reduce over 3-4 weeks. Ice packs will be placed on your face for the first 24 hours to help control the amount of swelling.
- Bruising can occur.
- A small amount of blood will ooze from your mouth and nose for the first 2 days. This is normal. If **bleeding from your mouth or nose starts once you are home, call the Oral Surgery Clinic immediately. Between the hours of 8:30 am - 3:30 pm, Monday -Friday, call (902) 473-5238. For all other times or if the above number is busy, call (902) 473-2222 and ask for the oral surgery resident on call.**
- There may be tape above and below your lips. This helps the healing process. You will be told when it can be removed.
- Your jaws may be fixed together with either elastics or wires. This allows for the proper healing of the bones.
- You may find it difficult to swallow and talk if your jaws are fixed together. This will improve after a couple days.
- Vomiting can occur. Do not panic. Many spaces exist between your teeth even when they are wired

together. These spaces will allow the vomit to pass. The nurse will help you.

- When you are fully awake and comfortable, you will be taken to your hospital room.
- Once you are in your room, you will be able to have visitors. We will try to accommodate your needs and your family's needs for contact. We also must respect the rights and needs of other patients. Please check with the nurses about visiting guidelines for your unit. Visitors may be asked to leave when the doctors or nurses come to see you or another patient.
- You will be encouraged to drink fluids. Your IV will be removed only when all the IV medications have been given and you are drinking enough fluids.
- Once you feel steady on your feet, you will be encouraged to get up and walk. You may need help walking on the first day.
- A dietitian will speak with you about what you can and cannot eat during the healing period. If possible, have the person who cooks your meals at this meeting.
- **It is very important to rinse your mouth as instructed.** The surgeon and residents will discuss mouth care with you. Keeping your mouth clean is needed to prevent infection. Do not brush your teeth until told to do so. Brushing your teeth too soon after the surgery can damage the stitches in your mouth.
- You will be given mouth and lip exercises to do. This improves the soft tissue healing around your mouth area.

- If your lips are dry ask the nurse for cream or ointment.
- The resident surgeons will visit you every morning. Please tell them if you have any concerns or problems.
- The surgeon can only estimate how many days you will be in hospital. You will be discharged home only when you are eating and drinking well and are comfortable.
- **Your surgery has involved the surgical cutting of bones. Like bone fractures, it will take many months for the bones to completely heal. During this time avoid any activities that may injure the surgery site.**

## Discharge Check List

- \_\_\_ Have the surgeons told you that you are ready for discharge home?
- \_\_\_ Have you arranged for a drive home?
- \_\_\_ Have you had x-rays taken after surgery?
- \_\_\_ Has the dietitian spoken with you?
- \_\_\_ Do you have a follow-up appointment at the Oral Surgery Clinic?
- \_\_\_ Have you received instructions from the oral surgeons about your care at home?
- \_\_\_ If your jaws are wired together, have you received a pair of wire cutters and instructions on their use?
- \_\_\_ Have you received your prescriptions?
- \_\_\_ Have the surgeons suggested when you can return to work?
- \_\_\_

## At Home

- You will be given prescriptions for antibiotics and pain pills if needed. It is very important to take these as instructed.
- You will be given a return appointment before you go home. This will enable the doctor to follow your progress and identify any problems.
- Continue to follow the diet recommended by your dietitian. You can expect a 5-10 pound weight loss. A greater weight loss should be reported to the doctor.
- Continue to brush your teeth as instructed. Rinse with salt and water (1 /2 tsp. salt in 8 oz. of water) as needed. Gum breakdown and accompanying soreness should be reported to the doctor.
- For at least 2 weeks after discharge, you should lead a relaxed and quiet life. You will find that you have less energy than usual and need more rest. After 2 weeks, you may resume your usual activities. You must avoid contact sports and swimming while the jaws are wired.
- Do not drink alcohol while your jaws are wired.
- Report signs of infection (such as fever, chills, increased pain, and swelling) to your oral surgeon.



If you should have any questions, do not hesitate to ask to moisten the air.

## Questions or Concerns Once You Are at Home

For **urgent questions or concerns** such as (but not limited to);

- Bleeding from the wound or nose.
- Difficulty swallowing or breathing.
- Significant nausea and/or vomiting.
- Increasing pain or pain not improving.
- Significant increase in swelling.
- Shift in bite.
- Fever.
- The loss of several elastics or wires resulting in a loosening of the jaw immobilization.


Please call **(902) 473-5238** Monday - Friday from 8:30 am -3:30 pm. If busy or after 3:30 pm call **(902) 473-2222** and ask for the **oral surgery resident** on call. Stay on the line and the resident will be with you shortly.



## Non urgent questions

Call the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Clinic, Victoria General between 8:30 am -3:30 pm Monday -Friday. The phone number is **(902) 473-2070**.





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Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazine articles and on line health information.  
For a list of public libraries in Nova Scotia go to [HTTP:1/publiclibraries.ns.ca](http://publiclibraries.ns.ca)

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