
TMJ Discectomy After Surgery Instructions

TMJ RELATED CONCERNS

- You may experience some new clicking and popping in the joint. You may feel as though your bite is off- this should resolve on its own within 6 months.
- **Change position carefully** following the surgery as it is common to experience some dizziness – this will resolve on its own.
- **Limit the amount of talking for the first few days.**

PAIN MANAGEMENT

- Alternate between an anti-inflammatory medication (ex. Ibuprofen, Naproxen) and a Tylenol based medication (ex. Tylenol or Tylenol #3). **Ibuprofen → 3hrs → Tylenol → 3hrs → Ibuprofen → etc.**

DIET

- Diet is more limited for a short time after surgery. Some ideas include soups, pasta, noodles, eggs, pudding, ice cream, yogurt, juice, milkshakes, pancakes, or anything soft that you can tolerate.
 - **Soft Diet for 2 months post-op.**
- Slowly begin to increase your diet as tolerated after the 2-month mark. Drink plenty of fluids.
- **Avoid anything too crunchy** (ex. nuts, seeds) **or anything too chewy** (ex. bagels, steaks).

BLEEDING/BRUISING

- Mild bleeding is expected.
- Bruising may occur and varies between patients – it may travel down the neck and collect at the chest.
- Keep your head elevated while laying down.

SWELLING

- Swelling is expected and will continue to peak up until the 48-hr point and can take 2 weeks to resolve.
- Use **ice packs 20 minutes ON, then 20 minutes OFF for the first 48 hours.** After 5 days you may begin to start using heat packs.

HYGIENE

- The incisions are closed with sutures and an adhesive but must be kept clean.
- After 3 days, you may wash the surgical sites with warm water and mild soap. Pat the sites dry with a towel. You may use a triple antibiotic ointment.
- **DO NOT smoke or vape for 2 weeks following surgery.**

NUMBNESS

- Some areas of altered sensation or numbness at the incision sites is normal. As sensation returns, you may experience pins and needles sensation.
- The facial nerve is near the area of the surgery site and the manipulation of this area may cause a temporary inability to close the eye or smile. **Call your surgeon if you are unable to close your eye.**

RESUMING ACTIVITIES

- On average, most patients will take 1–2 days off from normal activity.
- Light physical exercise is permitted. **Strenuous exercise (ex. heavy lifting) should be avoided for 7 days.**

GENERAL ANESTHETIC & IV SEDATION

- **Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, or sign legal documents for 24 hours post-surgery. You should not be left alone for 24 hours following surgery.**
- Muscle pain and generalized soreness can occur following surgery and may last for 2-3 days.
- You may experience a sore throat and nose bleeds throughout the day. These are common if you had a general anesthetic.

SIGNS OF INFECTION

- New onset swelling or pain
- Foul taste or odor in the mouth
- Fever
- Discharge from surgical sites

POST-OP QUESTIONS AND URGENT CONCERNS

- Your well-being is our primary concern. Should you have any questions regarding your recovery, please contact our office.
- A doctor is on-call 24 hrs/day, 7 days/week for any serious post-op concerns (**bleeding, uncontrolled pain, signs of infection**). In the event of more urgent concerns, call our office at your earliest convenience. If you are calling after office hours or on the weekend, the answering machine will direct you to the oral surgeon on-call.
- If you are admitted to the hospital within 10 days from your procedure, please notify us immediately.
- **If you are having a medical emergency (chest pain, shortness of breath or uncontrolled bleeding), do not delay * dial 911.**