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Post-Op Instructions After Reconstructive Jaw Surgery and Bone Grafting from the Hip

SWELLING/FEVER:

Post-operative swelling and bruising should be expected for approximately two weeks. To reduce this condition, your head should be elevated and cold compresses should be applied around the jaws, nose and eyes. Residual bruising may be noticeable for several weeks. If you experience severe swelling please call your surgeon. If a temperature above 38.3 occurs contact our office.

ACTIVITY:

Sit up or semi-recline. Elevate the head of your bed 30 degrees. **No strenuous activity, straining or bending over for 72 hours.** Increase activity as tolerated with **no heavy exercise for two weeks.** Do not smoke or drink alcohol for 30 days following surgery. Avoid excessive physical activities that raise the blood pressure, such as jogging, swimming, weight lifting and bending for the first several weeks after surgery. **No Nose Blowing.** Avoid activities that cause pounding or jarring. Use your non-surgical leg to stand from a sitting position, and take steps one at a time.

PAIN:

Some discomfort is normal following a tooth extraction(s) and is not always directly related to the surgical site. If pain medication is prescribed, take only as directed. Often it is beneficial to take the medication with, or after eating to help prevent nausea. *Do not drive while using narcotic pain medications.*

POST-OP ANTIBIOTICS:

If prescribed antibiotics, take your antibiotic doses with food. If you have a sensitive stomach, consider taking a probiotic which contains *S. boulardii*, which can be purchased at most drug stores and health food stores

DIET / EATING:

Eat something when you feel ready. **Do not chew** for the first 4 weeks. Your diet is to be **PUREED** (Mashed potatoes consistency or softer). Start with cool liquids at first. Have some dietary supplements ready such as Carnation Instant Breakfast, Ensure, Sustical, Boost, etc. Eat with a spoon, a straw, or simply drink from a glass. After 4 weeks you can progress to a soft diet (white fish, over-cooked pasta, steamed vegetables, etc.).

WASHING:

If you have incisions on the skin then do not get the surgical site wet for 24 hours after surgery. Later you may let water run over the surgical site. Do not soak. You may shower, but do not let shower spray directly onto the surgical site.

WOUND CARE:

Use saline nasal spray at least four times a day to keep the nostrils clear. Use rinse as directed. Rinse with salt water rinse at least 3 times a day. Start rinsing gently then rinse more vigorously after 2 days. After 7 days you should rinse with full force. Brush teeth 3 times a day. Skin sutures on the face (if any) should be left open to air after the first few days. Use a small amount (very thin coat) of Polysporin to the facial wounds twice a day if applicable. Keep the hip wound covered with gauze, but remove this and gently clean once daily. If there is an increasing area of redness and itching then call your surgeon, you may be developing an allergic reaction to the Polysporin. The sutures should be removed in 1 week. The incision will heal better if it is carefully kept clean during the healing period. After one week start gently running your fingertip along the incisions to massage them.

NAUSEA:

Nausea is a normal side effect of narcotic pain medications. If you have severe nausea or vomiting you may need to stop the pain medications or take an additional anti-nausea medication.

BLEEDING:

Active bleeding can be controlled with some simple measures: keep head elevated; stay calm and relaxed; for nasal bleeding use Neo-Synephrine (phenylephrine) or Afrin (Oxymetazoline) nasal spray; and be patient.

NO NOSE BLOWING:

You may gently sniff in. Use the saline nasal spray often. Only use Afrin for nose bleeds.

SMOKING / VAPING / ALCOHOL:

Cease all use of tobacco for 6 weeks prior to, and for 6 months following surgery. Failure to do so may have serious negative effects on the success of the surgery. Do not drink alcohol for a minimum of 48 hours following surgery as it may cause the disruption of healing and increase in complications such as wound breakdown and post-operative infections.

SLEEPING:

Be careful not to put pressure on the area during sleep, the changes in position of the bones need time to heal before they will be stable.

FACIAL EXERCISES:

Especially when having upper jaw surgery the muscles of facial expression will not work well and a lot of swelling will accumulate in the upper lip. Do smiling exercises three times a day after the surgery.

SUTURES:

Sutures inside your mouth will dissolve in approximately one and a half weeks. If they are falling loose they may be trimmed, but do not try to remove them before one week has passed. If small incisions were made on the face, those sutures should be removed 1 week after the surgery. A small amount of antibiotic ointment (Polysporin) should be applied twice a day to those facial incisions.