

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ORAL AND FACIAL SURGERY GROUP
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INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH JAW FRACTURES

1. It is important that you go to each follow-up appointment your doctor has scheduled for you. He needs to evaluate the progress of your healing until it is complete. If you fail to follow your doctors instructions or if you stop treatment before healing is complete, you are at high risk of developing complications such as infection, non-union of the fracture, improper occlusion(bite), or nerve damage. These problems, if not diagnosed and treated early, can have serious effects on your overall health.
2. It is **VERY IMPORTANT TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH CLEAN** during the period your jaws are wired together. The wires in your mouth are an irritation to your gums, but the cleaner you keep your mouth, the less of a problem this will be. You may begin cleaning your mouth as soon as you get home. It will be uncomfortable at first, and your gums may bleed, but it will become easier as time goes on. The wires should be kept so clean that they sparkle like new. You need to brush your teeth and the wires after every meal, no matter how small, plus 3 - 5 additional times per day (6 - 8 times per day total). You do not need to use toothpaste each time - it is the brushing action that is important. It is also good to rinse out your mouth three or four times a day. Warm salt water or mouth wash can be used for this purpose. If you have nothing else, use plain water. A Water-Pik or similar device is also helpful for keeping your mouth as clean as possible.
5. If you had any teeth extracted when your jaw was wired, it is normal to have mild bleeding from the extraction site. Do not spit the blood out, as this will remove the blood clot from the socket and bleeding will continue. It will not harm you to swallow a small amount of blood in your saliva. If there appears to be excessive bleeding, call the office for advice.
6. Diet is another important consideration. Because of your inability to chew, it will be very difficult to take an adequate diet. Therefore, several meals (6,7, or 8 per day) will be necessary. High calorie, high protein full liquids will be your diet for the entire fixation period. Anything (even pizza and meats) that can be mixed with whole milk and liquified in a blender will help in the dietary intake. Additional dietary supplements may include Carnation Instant Breakfast, Sego, Ensure, etc. Liquid multi-vitamins should also be used.
7. Medications which have been prescribed for you are important. If an antibiotic has been prescribed, it is very important to continue taking it as directed until all has been taken. Also, a liquid pain medication can be taken as directed only if needed for discomfort.
8. Nausea is no cause for alarm. Remember that even if you should become nauseated and vomit, everything that is in your stomach has been strained through your teeth and can easily pass back through. However, at the first sign of persistent, significant nausea, call your oral surgeon and he will prescribe anti-nausea medication for you in suppository form.
9. All patients with jaws wired should not drink alcohol for the period of fixation. No vigorous exercise or swimming should be allowed because of the difficulty in breathing and the strain on your fixation wires. To facilitate breathing, a decongestant spray (e.g.: Afrin or Neo-Synephrine nasal spray) should be bought at a pharmacy and carried with the patient for cases of nasal congestion. This should be used very sparingly.
10. Your period of fixation (having your jaws wired together) will range from 1-8 weeks depending on your individual type of fracture or the corrective procedure performed.
11. You should carry your wire cutters with you at all times to be used to cut all the vertical wires between your upper and lower teeth in case of emergency.
12. **If you have any questions, call the office at 818-788-4424. Someone will always be on call after office hours if there is a problem.**