



Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery of San Buenaventura

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR JAW IMMOBILIZATION

The following instructions and suggestions are designed to help you through the initial period following your procedure. They are valid following Orthognathic or Fracture surgery. More instructions and information is available for you on our website: **VenturaOralSurgery.com**. Please visit our website and don't hesitate to call or email us with your questions.

Your jaws can be immobilized with rubber bands or wired together for multiple reasons. Arch bars or orthodontic braces are used. Wires or elastics are then placed between the braces on your jaws to immobilize them in the correct position. The jaws are commonly immobilized for treatment of fractures, injuries to the jaws and joints as well as elective surgical repositioning of the jaws.

How long are my jaws going to be wired? This varies depending upon the reason for the treatment and the type of treatment you received. The period of immobilization can be anywhere from six to twelve weeks. Jaw fractures are commonly treated for minimum of six weeks of immobilization and then are tested for stability. If the fracture remains unstable, additional 2 to 4 weeks of immobilization may be required.

Spasm of your jaw muscles commonly occurs during the first weeks of jaw immobilization. You may notice a twitching or tightening in your jaw muscles, especially at night. This is a normal occurrence and usually corrects itself in a few weeks.

Why do my teeth hurt? Several teeth may become quite tender during the first week or two following immobilization. This is because your teeth are really holding the jaws still and it takes a while for them to get used to these new forces.

How do I clean my teeth? It is absolutely necessary that you clean your teeth and braces four to five times daily. Purchase a child size, soft bristle toothbrush. Pull your cheeks out to get the toothbrush toward the back of your mouth. You are not going to be able to brush the inside of your teeth. Vigorous rinsing during and after meals helps to keep the inside of your teeth clean. A mixture of hydrogen peroxide and water, mixed in equal amounts followed by salt water, composed of half teaspoon in 8 oz of water is a good rinse. Use a gentle back and forth stroke of brush to clean you teeth and braces. The braces should appear shiny and clean. This prevents swelling and infection of the gums as well as formation of teeth cavities. We strongly recommend use of a Water-Pik, especially if your are wearing a special plastic splint between your teeth. Remember, for the Water-Pik to be effective, you must brush your teeth to loosen the particles so that the water jet can remove them. This keeps cavities from forming where the teeth touch the plastic. Avoid carbonated beverages during the time when your jaws are immobilized.

Cutting the wires: You should never need to cut the wires holding your jaws immobilized. Possible reasons to cut the wires might include a serious accident or severe nausea and vomiting. Remember if there is enough room around your

teeth to eat a liquid diet then there is enough room to expectorate liquid material. Unnecessary cutting of the wires may prolong or jeopardize your treatment.

Sequence of wire removal: Patients are always curious about the sequence of removal of the wires. When your doctor feels that healing is adequate he will remove the four to six vertical wires between your upper and lower jaw. The wires around the individual teeth as well as the braces will remain in place until the doctor has checked you at least a week after release of immobilization. When the doctor has determined that your jaws have healed adequately and only when you are able to open your mouth enough for normal function, then the braces are removed. In some instances, if the healing is not complete the wires may be reapplied between the braces and another period of immobilization prescribed.

Constipation: This can be a problem caused by your liquid diet, especially if narcotic pain relievers are being taken. Bran purchased from health food store mixed with warm liquid food should solve the problem. It takes several teaspoons once or twice a day. If constipation continues to be a problem try fruit juices and Metamucil.

Vitamins: Vitamins are very important in your recovery. You should supplement your diet with 30 drops of liquid vitamins (available at most health food stores and pharmacies) added to a glass of tomato juice at the evening meal. For maximum benefit try this good tasting "Cocktail": Mix Brewer's yeast (Vit B), Liver extract (Vit B), protein powder (usually from a soy source) and orange juice and/or pineapple juice together and drink three times a day.

Calories: The healing adult requires 2000 to 2500 calories a day. Get used to adding up your calories to ensure proper nutrition. Most foods now have calories printed on their label. The healing period is not the time to diet!

Weighing yourself: When you get home following surgery, weigh yourself. This is the best guide you have regarding your dietary needs. Some people gain weight on a liquid diet but the tendency is to lose weight. An early loss of several pounds is not uncommon. Losing weight after the first few days is cause for action. You must increase the number of meals and/or their size until your weight stabilizes. This is a must for proper healing.

LIVING WITH A LIQUID DIET

Accommodating to a full liquid diet will probably not be as unpleasant as one would initially expect. The use of a blender to liquefy or puree the usual food elements is of utmost convenience and adds variation to the standard and commercially prepared liquid foods. Because of the peculiarities of a liquid diet, frequent small feedings are usually necessary, usually six per day. You are encouraged to use your personal imagination and ingenuity to prepare selections that are palatable and tasteful. This guide is for the person in otherwise good health and under no medical restrictions. Those patients on special or restricted diets such as salt free, low cholesterol, diabetic, low residue, or low calorie diets will require special formulations.

How can I eat when I can't open my mouth? Although you won't be able to have solid foods, you can still eat well without chewing. Good nutrition is an essential part of your recovery, so we're eager to guide you in selecting proper foods.

Eat well to get well: Proteins and vitamins are the chief "helper" in healing and in preventing infection. Meat, fish, eggs, cheese, and milk are the best sources of protein. Milk and milk-shakes will be easy for you to eat, and we think you'll enjoy the meat, fish, eggs, and cheese when they are prepared according to the menus in this booklet. You will need plenty of the so-called "energy foods". Sugars and starches are important because of their high caloric content. These calories will provide the "vim and vigor" necessary for your rapid recovery.

SOME GENERAL SUGGESTIONS:

- ◆ Dry skim milk is an excellent low-cost protein. Two level tablespoons, unpacked, may be added to almost any soup, beverage, or liquid food to give additional protein and calories. It will not change the flavor or consistency of the food.
- ◆ Powdered protein supplements are available in plain or flavored varieties. They provide tasty and excellent sources of protein and calcium. These goods are available in grocery stores as: Instant breakfast, powdered or liquid nutriment, Sego, Tiger's Milk. Pharmacy preparations include; Ensure, Sustage, Meritene, and others. The Cambridge diet has a special high calorie liquid diet which is satisfactory, raw eggs in milkshakes is an excellent source of protein.
- ◆ You can use these preparations between meals and at bedtime: mix 1½ cups of the powdered food, 2½ cups water, 1 tablespoon sugar, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. This can be prepared in the morning, kept chilled in the refrigerator, and taken in three equal parts: morning, afternoon, and evening.
- ◆ Cooked breakfast cereals such as Cream of Wheat are best prepared by adding to one serving 1½ cups of milk, 1 tablespoon of sugar, and three pats of butter, heating to taste.
- ◆ Some of the breakfast menus include ham and eggs. This may be prepared by adding the contents of one small can of deviled ham, three pats of butter, and 1½ cups of milk. Heat and follow with the addition of two eggs with continuous stirring or blending to get a fine textured mixture which can be taken through a straw.
- ◆ Cream soups suggested are made with one can of strained baby vegetable of your choice or a similar amount of undiluted condensed soup mixed with ¾ cup of light cream, 2 tablespoons of dry skim milk, and three pats of butter. Most commercial soups and even restaurant soups are suitable for blending. Avoid soups containing chicken or rice as these do not blend well.
- ◆ Strained meats will require some thinning with consommé, bouillon, tomato juice, beef stock, or milk. Ask your butcher to prepare triple fine ground beef for easier passage between the teeth.
- ◆ Ice cream, sherbet, and ices may be beaten with equal parts of milk to make a liquid mixture. Puddings are available in dry, ready cooked form in chocolate, vanilla and butterscotch flavors. The puddings will thicken in approximately ten minutes on standing, so they should be prepared with nearly twice the amount of milk specified

in the directions on the package. The milk should be chilled and the dessert eaten shortly after preparation to avoid too thick a consistency.

◆ Blender: A food blender is absolutely necessary for the preparation of a palatable liquid diet and you are encouraged to get one as soon as possible.

Meal Favorites: The following is the result of polling our patients for their favorite recipes:

- 1- Meat, potatoes, and gravy: use strained baby meats, thinned mashed potatoes, and any flavor gravy.
- 2- Tacos and refried beans: Use seasoned ground beef, tomato juice to thin, melted cheese, taco sauce is optional and beans with water to thin.
- 3- Tiger's milk: 1 cup milk or buttermilk, 1/2 cup cottage cheese, 1/3 cup yogurt (plain or flavored), 1/3 cup or more of fruit, 1 tablespoon wheat germ, 1 teaspoon brewer's yeast, 1 tablespoon "instant protein".
- 4- High Protein Soup: Fry triple fine ground meat until just off pink and keep in refrigerator. Put some in the blender with milk and different foods for a variety of meals: add Cottage cheese, cooked noodles, macaroni or potatoes, tomatoes, avocados, wheat germ, green peppers or canned chili peppers, and Nabisco 100% bran for bulk. Season with just salt and pepper or use different pre-made mixes, like stroganoff, meat loaf, etc. Heat and drink as a soup.

Individual Favorites:

- 1- Yogurt flavored with fruit.
- 2- Instant mashed potatoes and mashed avocados with plenty of mayonnaise are tasty and easy to work with.
- 3- Soups are very popular. All kinds of soups are adequate. Patients suggest extra seasonings and extra broth be added to soup.
- 4- Add fruit to protein drinks and milk shakes.
- 5- Liquid Jell-O is popular.