



4913 Golden Foothill Parkway
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762
Office: 916.941.9860
Fax: 916.941.9860

TEMPOROMANDIBULAR JOINT ARTHROCENTESIS Postoperative Instructions

You have just undergone temporomandibular joint arthrocentesis (washing of your joint). This handout is designed to explain your postoperative course, limitations and what to expect.

A small bandage will be placed over your surgical site. This should remain in place for two to three days following your surgery.

A small amount of blood may be noted on the bandage. This is Normal. The bandage can be removed after day three.

You should not experience any bleeding after removing the bandage. If you do experience bleeding, apply pressure with your thumb for ten minutes. If this fails to stop the bleeding, please call the office @ (916) 941-9860 during regular office hours or Dr. Liberty at (916) 749-6417 24 hours a day.

You can expect some bruising and swelling in the surgical site. Application of ice for the first few hours is helpful.

You will be sent home with an anti-inflammatory and pain medication. It is important that you take the anti-inflammatory medication as instructed. The pain medication needs only to be taken as necessary.

For six weeks following surgery, your diet should consist of a soft diet as chewing may disrupt the joint and can cause problems.

The diet does not need to be limited to liquids, but the consistency should be that of cottage cheese, pasta, egg salad, and other soft foods that do not require heavy chewing.

You should begin jaw exercises on the third day following your surgery. These are stretching exercises to reduce stiffness in the joint associated with the surgery. This should be performed several times a day.

Careful stretching and gentle range-of-motion exercises are very important in your recovery. You should open your jaw as wide as you can and hold it in place. The first week, you should be able to open enough to get two fingers in between your upper and lower teeth.

By the second week after surgery, you should be opening wide enough to fit three fingers between your upper and lower teeth. This can be achieved by gentle stretching of the jaw with your fingers, or by using the tongue blades you were given.

If you wore a splint before your surgery, you may place the splint back in your mouth the third day following surgery. You may continue to wear the splint as you had before the surgery.