



Orthognathic Jaw Surgery

Postoperative Recovery

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Disclaimer

- The information provided in these slides, including all pre-operative and post-operative care instructions, is for educational and informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.
- Consult Your Surgeon
Always seek the direct advice of your surgeon or another qualified healthcare provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition, surgical procedure, or recovery plan. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you have read in these slides or on this website.
- Emergency Situations
If you are a patient experiencing a medical emergency, severe pain, heavy bleeding, or sudden complications, do not rely on these slides or on this website. Please call 911, or go to the nearest emergency room immediately.

Postoperative Phase of Treatment

- Postoperative follow-up every 1-2 weeks for the first 6 weeks
 - Initial healing takes 6 weeks
 - Complete healing takes 9 to 12 months
- Postsurgical orthodontics, 6-12 months

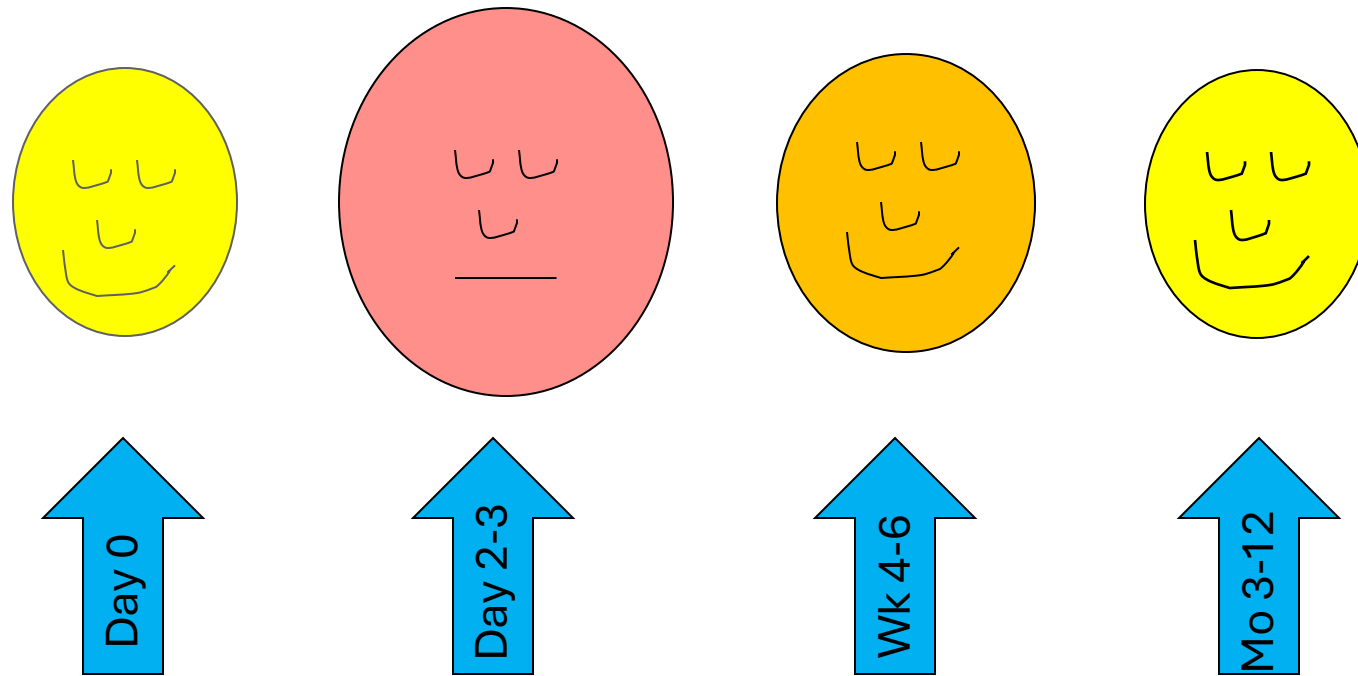
Elements of Surgical Recovery

In our experience, the first week after surgery is the hardest for most patients, and symptoms tend to improve significantly after this first week. Usually most patients are doing quite a bit better by the end of the second week after surgery.

- Facial swelling
- Nasal congestion
- Multimodal pain control
- Dietary restrictions
- Oral hygiene
- Facial and oral numbness
- Antibiotics
- Elastic therapy/wires
- Facial exercises
- Jaw therapy

Swelling

- Ice 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off for the first 48-72 hours after surgery.
- Sleep with head of bed elevated to 30 degrees or sleep on two pillows.
- Swelling peaks 2-3 days after surgery and then slowly improves over time:



Nasal Congestion

Avoid blowing your nose for the first two weeks after jaw surgery.

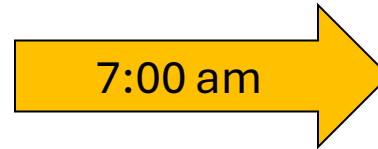
Nasal saline spray. Administer every 2-3 hours and as needed.

Mucinex® (guaifenesin). May be used to clear throat mucus.

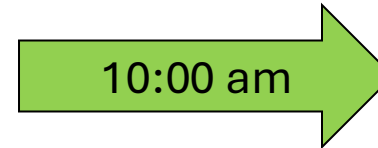
Afrin® (oxymetazoline). Use if there is bright red nasal bleeding, or if recommended by your surgeon. Administer 2 sprays in each nostril every 12 hours for 2-3 days. Do not administer beyond 3 days as this may cause rebound congestion.

Pain Management

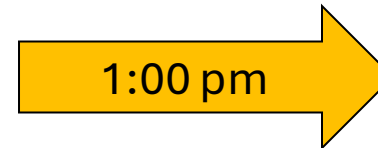
- Tylenol and ibuprofen are taken every 6 hours and alternated every 3 hours as shown in the example to the right.
- Take ibuprofen with food. Follow dosing instructions.
- Oxycodone/narcotic pain medication for severe pain.
- After the first 72 hours, warm compresses and gentle massage over the angle of the jaw may be helpful for muscle spasm.



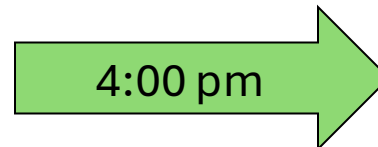
Ibuprofen 400-600mg



Tylenol 650mg



Ibuprofen 400-600mg

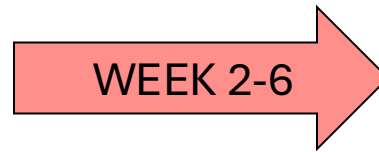


Tylenol 650mg

Dietary Progression



Clear/Full liquids (ex. juice, milk, soups, shakes), Pureed



Pureed, soft/nonchew



Soft food consistency chewing



Regular diet

- Keep up with nutrition shakes through your recovery. Your progression may vary from this.

Oral Hygiene

1

Rinse your mouth after every meal

2

Use peridex/prescribed oral rinse for the first week after surgery

3

After the first week, switch to salt water rinses or over the counter mouthwash

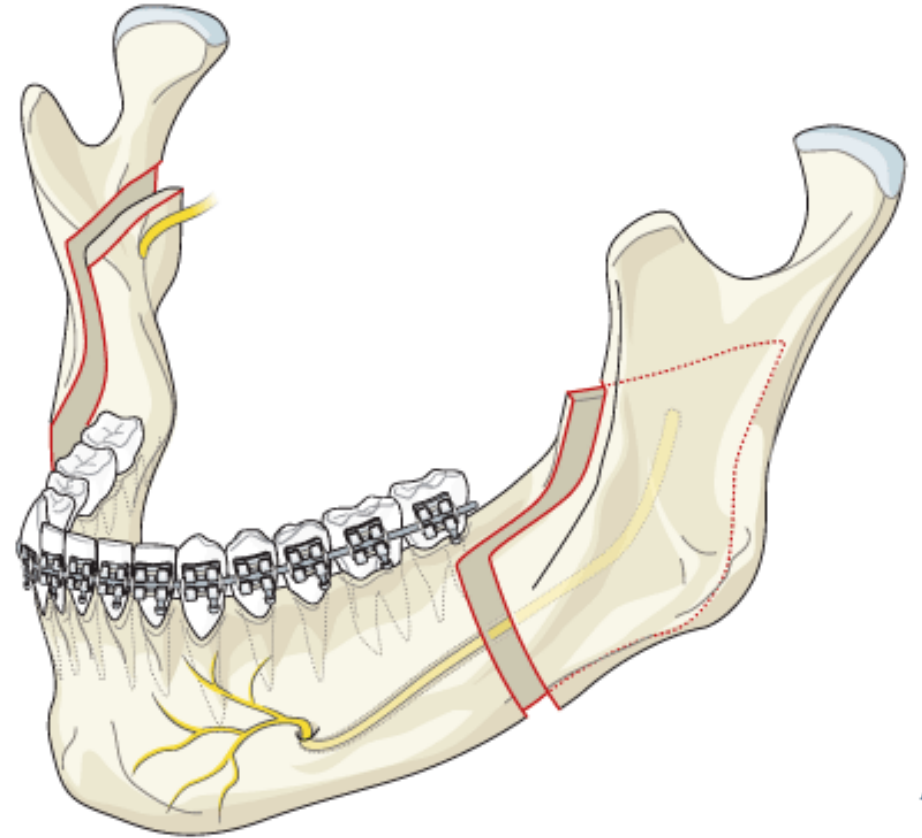
4

Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush.

- A pediatric toothbrush usually works well.
- Keep the brush on the teeth.
- Avoiding brushing the gums and surgical incisions.

Numbness

- It is very common to have numbness in the cheeks, lower lip, gums, palate, teeth, and chin after surgery.
- This may take many months to recover. In some instances, there may be areas of numbness that do not recover.
 - The lower lip/chin is the most common area for residual numbness.
- There is a small risk of numbness in the tongue as well.



Orofacial Sensory Retraining

- Starting 1-2 weeks after surgery, gently brush your skin using a mirror to stimulate cognitive feedback.
- Use a cotton swab, soft brush or cloth.
- Alternative between light touch and light stroke using your mirror.
- Close your eyes and try to visualize where the contact occurred.
- Then open your eyes and use a mirror to confirm the point of contact.
- Try vertical, horizontal and oblique strokes.
- Spend 1-2 minutes per day a few times per day after surgery.

Antibiotics

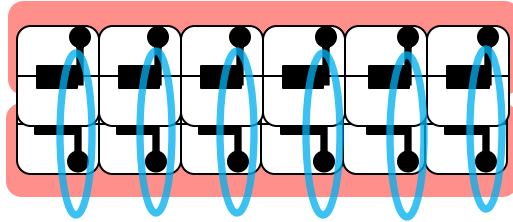
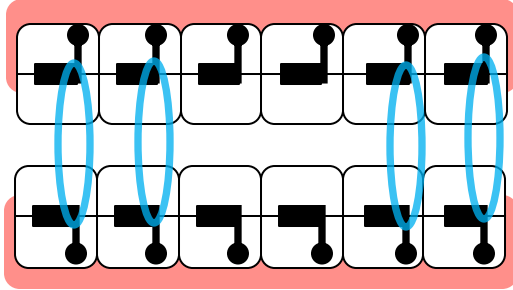
- Please take your antibiotics as prescribed after surgery.
- Common antibiotic choices include:

Amoxicillin/clavulanate

or

Clindamycin

How long will I be wired or banded shut?



- In most cases, your surgeon will lighten your elastics after 0-4 days so that you can begin gentle jaw range of motion
- About 1% of the time, rubber bands or wires may be used to hold your jaws shut for 6-8 weeks, particularly if the mandible experiences a “bad split.”
- **Patients are seen every 1-2 weeks for the first 6 weeks after surgery**
- **The specific protocol for managing rubber bands and/or jaw wires will be customized to you and guided by your surgeon and/or orthodontist**

Postoperative Orthodontic Treatment

- The goal of surgery is to make the big movements to your jaws to get them into a corrected position.
- After surgery, your orthodontist will make the fine movements to your teeth to detail and optimize your bite.
- Wearing a retainer will be important in the long term to help minimize relapse.

Facial Exercises

Starting 2-4 weeks after surgery, self directed facial exercises and jaw therapy may be performed.

Pucker your lips, smile widely, puff out your cheeks, and stretch your lips and nose using your facial muscles.

You may choose to work with a myofunctional therapist before and after surgery to help with both tongue posture and strengthening/range of motion for perioral and facial musculature.

Jaw Exercises

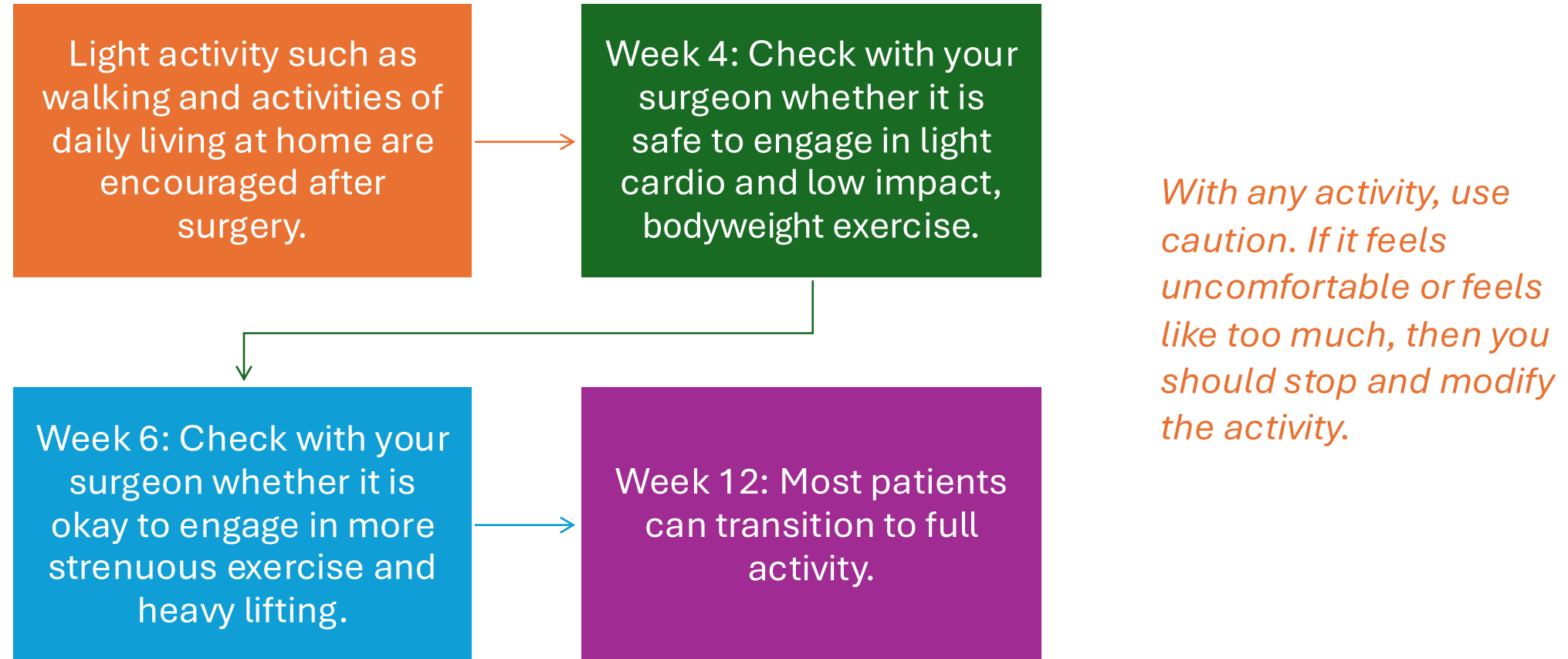
- Jaw range of motion improves with time after surgery.
- Starting 2-4 weeks after surgery, self-directed jaw therapy may be performed.
- Open your mouth open as wide as possible. Hold for 30 seconds. Perform 5 repetitions. Repeat 3-5 times per day.
- If indicated at week 4, your surgeon may ask you to use the "Hold and Relax" technique. Open your mouth halfway and place a fist under the jaw. Maintain stable mouth opening against the resistance from your fist for 5 seconds. After each rep, open your mouth widely for 30 seconds. Perform 5 reps per session, and 3 sessions per day.
- The thumb and index finger can be used to gently stretch the bite open to improve range of motion starting at 4 weeks. Only do this if recommended by your surgeon.
- If there is a plastic splint in your mouth, ensure that you are biting stably and completely into the splint when you close your mouth.
- A referral for jaw physical therapy can be made if necessary.

Frequently Asked Questions

What can I prepare before surgery to get organized?

- Syringes and squeeze bottles. These will be provided in the hospital, but you may choose to stock up on your own before surgery.
- Blender
- Liquid nutrition options: meal replacements, protein shakes, broths
- Jaw ice wrap (jaw bra) or ice machine. Alternatively, ice packs will be provided while you are in the hospital.
- Pill crusher
- Discuss whether your prescription medications can be crushed or if a liquid alternative is available with your prescribing provider(s).
- Baby toothbrush
- Lip balm or moisturizer
- Wedge pillow to help sleep with head of bed elevated
- Humidifier to help deal with nasal congestion

When can I engage in physical activity after jaw surgery?



How long does it take to heal?

How much time do I need off school or work?

Initial bone healing takes 6-12 weeks.

Complete bone healing takes 9-12 months.

For school or desk jobs, most patients can return at 2-4 weeks, although some patients may need more time.

For physically demanding jobs, patients may need 4-8 weeks off work, although some patients may need more time.