

# Postsurgical Instructions

## *Orthognathic Surgery: at the Hospital General Anesthesia*



**COLORADO  
SURGICAL  
ARTS**

The Wisdom Teeth and  
Dental Implant Experts

Care of your mouth after surgery has an important effect upon healing. Swelling, discomfort, restricted jaw function and cheek discoloration is expected, and need not cause alarm. You will look the worst on postoperative day 3, but begin to feel better.

### ***Sequence of Events***

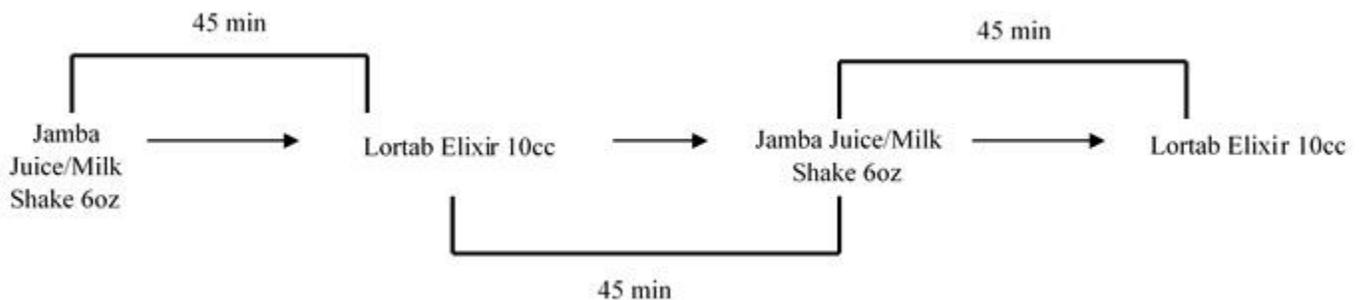
The key to a rapid and uneventful recovery is eating food prior to taking pain medications, staying ahead of the pain with pain medication and refraining from any activity for 24 hours. The following is a recommended sequence of events. Dr. Stone may customize this sequence for your specific needs.

### ***Day of Surgery: In the hospital***

After your surgery you will be in the recovery room for about 2 hours then transported to your room. One adult family member is permitted to stay all night in your room. At your bedside, you will have 1) IV pain medication, fluids and antibiotics, 2) a plastic syringe with a rubber tip to deliver liquids to your mouth, 3) a steroid cream to keep your lips moist, 4) Afrin nasal spray to keep your nose breathing patent, and 4) Ice packs to apply to both cheeks. The nurse will set up a button for you to push, which will automatically deliver pain medication into your IV.

### ***Day After Surgery: In the hospital***

The day after surgery you will be disconnected from your IV and begin to take oral liquids, oral pain and antibiotic medication, and ambulate in the hallway with assistance. Liquid foods (2-6 oz. no straws) to include Jamba Juice (no seeds-strawberry or citrus-peach, chocolate, mango or banana are best), milk shakes or cold soups waiting 45 minutes prior to taking the first pain pill (Lortab Elixir). If you are not experiencing an upset stomach, continue the sequence of alternating liquid foods and pain medication as outlined below. The goal is to take 1 pain pill (Lortab Elixir) within the first 4 hours after surgery. Do not exceed the maximum 15 cc every 6 hours or 90 cc in 24 hours.



If you experience nausea, stop taking pain and antibiotic medications and liquid food. This will only worsen the nausea. After waiting a period of time (1 hour) for the nausea to pass, begin to slowly restart the liquids then the pain medications. If you have waited one hour and the nausea has not passed, you can drink one ounce of a carbonated beverage (Ginger Ale). Follow this with mild tea or clear broth and soda crackers. Be careful not to chew the crackers over the surgical site as you will be numb and unable to feel these areas. If during this process you throw up, wait 45 minutes before restarting clear liquids (Ginger Ale, clear broth). Advance to more solid liquids (Jamba Juice, milk shake) slowly.

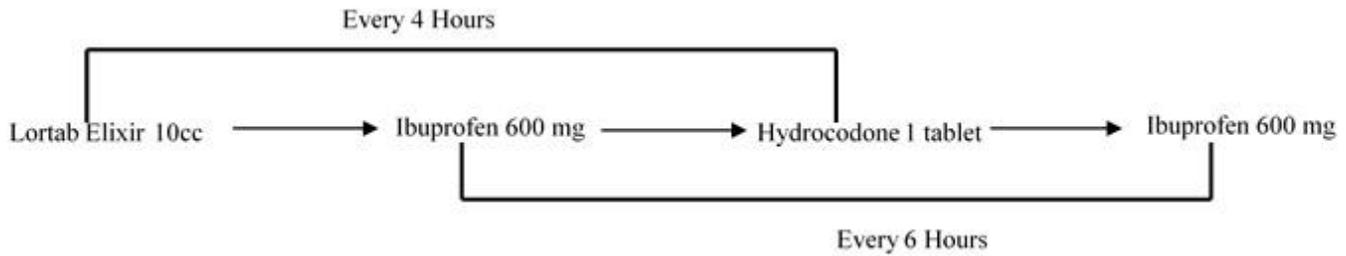
During this same period, keep ice (bags of frozen peas or corn) on your face 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off to reduce facial swelling. Keep gauze over the surgical site only if you are actively bleeding. Swallowing blood will result in nausea. If you vomit, it is usually one time clearing blood from your stomach. When you use the bathroom, someone must accompany you so that you don't fall.

### ***Day Two After Surgery: At Home***

This is the maintenance phase of recovery. You have begun taking liquid foods, pain and antibiotic medications and are not experiencing nausea. During the first day, patients often complain of little discomfort due to the local anesthesia (numb mouth) and IV pain medication. Some of the local anesthesia may last into the night, but most will begin to disappear four hours after surgery. You are now taking Lortab Elixir (narcotics) and can consider weaning off these narcotics and begin liquid Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) 600mg every six hours. It is important that you continue to stay ahead of the pain by taking 600mg of Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) every six hours. If you get behind on pain medication, it takes significantly more medication and time to get the pain back under control. When you use the bathroom, someone must accompany you so that you don't fall.

### ***Pain medications not working***

You can expect soreness at the surgical site for one to two weeks. If you are experiencing break through pain, begin alternating pain medication as outlined below. You can take Lortab Elixir and Ibuprofen together; however, the chance of nausea and vomiting is significantly increased. Do not take Tylenol as Lortab Elixir contains Tylenol and you will exceed the recommended dose. Do not exceed the maximum 15 cc every 6 hours or 90 cc in 2 hours.



### ***Post-Operative Day #2: First Day Home***

The first day home pain medication requirements are usually significantly less. It is for this reason that Dr. Stone recommends using the Lortab Elixir only for break through pain. Continue taking Ibuprofen 600mg every 6 hours for the next 7 days. Ibuprofen will reduce soreness, pain and swelling. Ibuprofen does not make you sleepy, but Lortab Elixir does. It is important to stay at home and rest. You may be able to perform light work duties from home, but do not go into work. Should you experience pain requiring more than Ibuprofen, you may take a Lortab Elixir. Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking Lortab Elixir. You will experience swelling worsened by physical activity. You will have a non-chewing diet for 6 weeks.

### ***Post-Operative Day #3: Second Day Home***

Although you may awake with more swelling on the second post-operative day, you will begin feeling better. Continue to maintain ibuprofen for soreness. Your lower jaw and teeth will be numb usually lasting 2-6 months.

### ***Wound Healing and Bleeding***

Slight bleeding is expected for 7-10 days after surgery. If bleeding is excessive, place a roll of sterile gauze to the nose or face or a dry tea bag or gauze in your mouth and apply constant pressure for 30 minutes. Chewing on the gauze or talking with gauze in your mouth will milk the site and cause continued bleeding. Spitting or using straws causes bleeding by drawing the clot from the surgical site. Avoid this if at all possible. The sutures will begin to dissolve and fall out after 3 days. After postoperative day 3, bleeding from the surgical site when cleaning is an indication of irritation. This is not a complication, but should be treated by improving your oral hygiene. Do not blow your nose after surgery as this can cause a nose bleeding. Keep your lips moist with Vaseline or lip balm (Chap Stick).

### ***Cleaning Your Mouth***

The day of surgery, do not clean the surgical site, spit or rinse your mouth as this can cause bleeding and loss of the blood clot. After 24 hours, you can resume cleaning your braces, teeth and gums with a water pick and mechanical tooth brush and tooth paste. Be careful not to use the water pick or tooth brush on the incisions. This will be difficult as the area will be numb. The day following surgery, clean the incisions after each meal with the following sequence: 1) a cotton tipped applicator (Q-Tip) dipped in diluted 3% hydrogen peroxide (½ water, ½ 3% hydrogen peroxide- no double dipping), 2) gentle swish with warm salt-water (1/2 teaspoon of salt in a large glass of warm water), and 3) lastly swish with Chlorhexidine Gluconate 0.12% (Peridex) oral rinse. Do not swallow this oral rinse. This care must be continued for at least 7 days. After 7 days you can try a soft child size tooth brush with tooth paste to clean the surgical incisions. When you are able to use a tooth brush to clean your incisions, you can discontinue the salt water rinses and cotton tipped applicators with hydrogen peroxide.

### ***Cleaning Your Face***

Small incisions on your face can be cleaned with a Q-Tip and hydrogen peroxide as outlined above in "cleaning your mouth". The face dressing, Steri-Strips, can be removed after 3 days. Make sure to clean off all dried blood from this site.

### ***Swelling Control***

Apply an ice pack to the jaw immediately upon your return home from surgery, 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off. The day after surgery, switch from ice to moist or dry heat applied to the jaw, 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off and continue heat applications for up to 2 days. As a technique to apply moist heat to your face, place two athletic tube socks in a bowl of water, microwave to warm, tie socks together and drape them over your head. Facial and oral swelling will peak at day 3, and may last 7-10 days. Facial bruising will develop by day 3 lasting 7-10 days. Assume a semi-upright bed position when sleeping using 2 pillows for the first 48 hours. This will reduce facial swelling. Expect more facial swelling on the side of your face you sleep on. During surgery the anesthesiologist placed a tube in your mouth and throat to help you breathe. This results in a sore throat and nose for about 7 days and a nose bleed on and off for the first week.

### ***Diet***

To skip meals will add to your discomfort. Maintain a liquid diet for the first week of surgery (Ensure 1,800-2,500 calories/day). Avoid hot liquids if you are numb as you may burn your mouth. Increase your fluid intake, but do not use straws as this will disrupt healing. Use the provided monojet syringe to deliver liquid foods to your mouth. The syringe should be placed adjacent to your teeth inside your cheek, but void injecting food or liquid into the incision. After the first week, most of the orthodontic elastics will be removed and you can begin to advance your diet to soft foods high in protein and vitamins (mash potatoes, fish, overcooked pasta, bananas and yogurt). Do not chew foods (steak, chicken and sandwiches) for 6 weeks. Chewing hard foods before 6 weeks may result in the jaw not healing. Watch for irregularity of bowel habits, which can be caused by antibiotics or pain medication. If you develop diarrhea, stop the antibiotics and call Dr. Stone. If you develop constipation, consider stopping the narcotics (Lortab Elixir).

### ***Physical Exercise***

It is important to stay at home and rest for the week avoiding physical activity. However, after the first day at home, it is important to get out of bed and move around. You can begin light exercising on postoperative day 7, but don't expect to perform at optimal physical activity until the end of the 2nd postoperative week. When physically active, you may experience an increase in pain or soreness at the surgical site. If this occurs, discontinue that activity. This pain or soreness will not result in a compromised surgical result, but it could delay your recovery. Swimming is permitted after the 2 postoperative weeks..

### ***Travel, Work or School***

It is important not to travel or return to work or school for 1-2 weeks. A change of pressure (elevators, Tahoe or airplanes) may be uncomfortable and cause oral or nasal bleeding.

### ***Smokers***

Do not smoke after surgery. Smoking significantly increases the risk of complications.

### ***Items to Get Before Surgery***

Magic slate, Etch a Sketch or paper pad with pen

Due to heavy elastics (your mouth won't be wired shut), it will be difficult for you to talk for the first week. These items can aid in your communication.

Blender/Food Processor, Strainer and Thermos

Because you are on a non-chewing diet for 6 weeks, pureed foods offer more meal choices and allows you to take food to work. A Strainer helps to separate out larger food particles that would otherwise get caught in your braces. A Thermos allows you to transport your meals.

Water Pick

A water pick helps clean your braces and the inside of your mouth.

### ***Surgical Stent***

Dr. Stone may choose to place surgical stent to aid in your jaw healing. The stent is similar to a night guard and sometimes has a piece of plastic covering part of your palate. This stent is attached to your orthodontic wires and can only be removed by Dr. Stone. Typically, Dr. Stone removes this stent at postoperative week 6.

### ***Allergic Reaction / After Hours Contact***

If you develop hives or a rash, discontinue all medication and immediately contact our office at (303) 806-8600.