

Arthroscopic Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Surgery: Jaw Joint Surgery (Outpatients)

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The temporomandibular joint (TMJ) is also called the jaw joint. TMJ surgery is done to treat problems with your jaw joints (like diseases that cause pain and limit your jaw movement).

Arthroscopic TMJ surgery is an outpatient surgery. This means that you do not need to stay overnight in the hospital after your surgery.

This pamphlet explains what to expect after your TMJ surgery.

After your surgery

Recovery area

- After your surgery, you will be taken to the recovery area. Most people stay there for about 1 hour. How long you stay in the recovery area will depend on how long your surgery was.
- Nursing staff will check your vital signs (like your breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure) several times while you are in the recovery area.
- Until you are steady on your feet, a nurse will help you to the bathroom.

At home

- You may feel sleepy and lightheaded when you first get home.
- When you are resting, raise your head up on 2 pillows.

Eating and drinking

- For the first 24 hours (1 day) after surgery, you may have cold liquids and soft, mushy foods (like ice cream, Jell-O[®], and milkshakes).
- After the first 24 hours, you may eat warm soups and very soft foods for the next 1 to 2 days.

Swelling

- You will have swelling in your face. It may get worse around 3 days after your surgery. This is common.
- For the first 48 hours (2 days) after surgery, you can use an ice pack to help lower swelling. Place it on your jaw for 20 minutes, leave it off for 20 minutes, then repeat.
- After 48 hours, use warm, moist (damp) heat (like a damp washcloth) instead of an ice pack.

Stitches

- If you have stitches in front of your ear:
 - › See your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) 7 days (1 week) after your surgery to have them taken out.
 - › If you do not have a primary health care provider, go to a walk-in clinic.

Pain

- Take pain medication as prescribed by your surgeon.
- **Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medication.**



Physio sticks

- If you have been given physio sticks, use them as directed.

What are your questions?

Please ask a member of your health care team. We are here to help you.

If you have any of the following symptoms:

- › Bleeding from your incision (cut)
- › Trouble swallowing or breathing
- › A lot of nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) and/or vomiting (throwing up)
- › Pain that does not get better, or that gets worse
- › Swelling that gets worse
- › Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
- **Call 902-473-5238 (8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday to Friday)**
 - › **If the line is busy, leave a message.**
- **Outside of these hours, call 902-473-2222 and ask for the oral surgery resident on call.**
 - › **Stay on the line and the resident will be with you shortly.**

If your question or concern is not urgent, call the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Clinic

- › Phone: 902-473-2070
- › 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday to Friday

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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