



Patient & Family Guide

2024

After Your Wired Jaw Surgery



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After Your Wired Jaw Surgery

- You will have bars on your top and bottom teeth.
- The head of your bed will be raised. This helps to lower swelling in your face.
- Right after surgery, you may be placed on your side. This will make it easier for you to breathe.
- The surgery team will check on you each morning that you are in the hospital.

Wires and wire cutters

- There will be cross wires or elastics on the bars on your teeth. These hold your mouth closed.
- For your safety, there will be a set of wire cutters at your bedside at all times. These will only be used in an emergency. For example, if you are having trouble breathing.

Comfort and pain management

- You may have:
 - › Swelling
 - › Bruising
 - › A stuffy nose
 - › Mild bleeding

These are common after this surgery.

Your health care team will offer:

- › pain medication to help with any discomfort you may have.
- › ice packs to help lower swelling and pain.
- You may be on humidified (damp) air to help prevent a stuffy nose.
- Your lips may get dry or chapped. If you are not on oxygen, ask a member of your health care team for a petroleum-based jelly (Vaseline®). You can also use your own lip balm.
- It may be hard to talk right after surgery. This will get better after a couple of days. We can give you a pen and paper so you can write down what you would like to say.

Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) and vomiting (throwing up)

- If you have nausea, ring your call bell and tell a member of your health care team. We can give you medication to help.

If you vomit, try not to panic. There is enough space between your teeth for the vomit to pass through. A member of your health care team may help you lean forward and use suctioning equipment to get the vomit out of your mouth.

Eating and drinking

- You will get fluids through an intravenous (I.V.) tube inserted (put in) in your arm with a needle. This will keep you hydrated (make sure your body has enough water) until it is safe for you to drink liquids.
- **It is very important that you get enough to eat.** A dietitian will meet with you to talk about this. If someone else makes your meals, try to have them at this meeting.
- You may be given supplements to help make sure you are getting enough nutrition.
- **Do not** use a straw until after your cross wires or elastics are taken out. Using a straw may damage the wires or stitches in your mouth.

Mouth care

- **Gently rinse your mouth often to keep it clean.**
- You will get a prescription for an antiseptic rinse. Use it to rinse your mouth **at least 4 times a day**, and as needed.

Smoking

- Smoking can slow your healing or lead to an infection.
- Stop smoking for as long as possible after surgery.

- Try to avoid smoking until your jaw has healed.
- Ask your health care team for resources about quitting smoking or nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).

At home

Eating and drinking

- You will only be able to have liquids for 4 to 6 weeks, or as told by your surgeon.
- You will need a blender or a food processor to make your meals.

Medications

- You may have to take antibiotics (medication to help prevent an infection).
- You will be given a prescription for pain medication, if needed. **Do not drive while taking pain medication.**

Mouth care

- **It is important to keep your mouth clean and free of food.**
- Rinse your mouth with an antiseptic rinse 4 times a day and as told by your surgeon.
- You may also rinse with warm salt water a few times a day.
- **Do not** use a toothbrush unless your surgery team says it is OK.

- You may use lip balm, as needed.
- You may use dental wax to protect your lips from the cross wires or elastics. You can find dental wax in the oral (mouth) health section of your drugstore.

Emergencies and wire cutters

- We will loan you a set of wire cutters to take home. We will show you how to use them.
- **Only use wire cutters in an emergency.**
- Please return the wire cutters at your last visit with your surgeon.

Call your surgeon right away or go to the Emergency Department if you have:

- Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F), chills, or vomiting that is new
- A lot of pain or swelling that is **not** getting better, or is getting worse
- Severe (very bad) nausea or vomiting
- Trouble swallowing or breathing
- Bleeding from your wound or your nose
- Loss of several cross wires or elastics that makes your jaw shift

Notes:

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>

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Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.