

Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Repair

After Visit Summary

This is general information. Please see your After Visit Summary for how to take care of yourself after surgery.

Your health care team will work with you to understand any challenges you have after your hospital stay. This will help your team work toward a plan to make sure you have the right care and support to help manage your health after you leave the hospital.

Your Surgery

You had surgery to fix the temporomandibular joint in your jaw.

What to Expect After Surgery

- Your bite will change every day and your teeth will not fit together. This is caused by the swelling in the tissues and joint space. Within 6 to 8 weeks your bite should be in a stable position.
- You may have a change in your hearing, with muffled sound in your ear for 10 to 14 days after surgery. This is caused by changes in the Eustachian tube, the connection between the middle ear, the upper throat and the back of the nose.

Before the Surgery

- Tell your health care provider if you:
 - are pregnant
 - have a latex allergy
 - have diabetes
 - take a blood-thinner medicine.
- Remove any jewelry or piercings.

- Arrange to have someone drive you home. You will not be able to drive after the surgery.

Pain Relief

- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.
- For the first 48 hours, you may place an ice pack on your jaw for pain relief and to help keep the swelling down.
 - Wrap the pack in a light towel before using.
 - Keep the ice pack on for 20 minutes and then keep it off for 20 minutes.

Activity

- Your health care provider will tell you when it's OK for you to shower, drive, return to work, exercise and have sex.
- Follow your health care provider's directions for sleeping and how to position your head.
- Brush your teeth and rinse your mouth after each meal.
- Do your jaw exercises as directed.
- Slowly return to your regular level of activity.
- Follow your health care provider's directions for how much you can safely lift.
- Rest as needed.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

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Incision Care

- Follow any directions your health care provider gives you.
- Don't use lotions, creams, ointments, gels or powders on your incision site.

Food and Beverages

- Even if you have no pain, do not chew for at least 2 weeks or until your next clinic visit. Jaw rest is important for proper healing.
- Eat small liquid meals 6 to 8 times a day.
- Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- Avoid alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you:

- have a temperature of 101 F or higher
- can't close your eyelids
- clench your teeth
- have new pain or pain you can't control
- have bleeding that gets worse
- have problems having a bowel movement
- have signs of infection at your incision site:
 - pain
 - swelling
 - redness
 - odor
 - warmth
 - green or yellow discharge
- are unable to get out of bed
- have nausea (upset stomach), bloating or vomiting (throwing up) that won't stop
- have any questions or concerns.

Follow-up Appointment

Please keep all follow-up appointments with your health care provider or specialist, even if you are feeling well.