



Dr Sarel JP Botha

MBChB (Pret), BChD (Pret), Dip Odont. Oral Surg. (Pret),
MBA (Regent), MChD (Mac.Fac.Med), FCMFOS (SA), FIBCSOMFS

Maxillofacial & Oral Surgeon

Osteotomy of the jaw - Pre- and Post-operative care

It is very important to realize that this is not a minor procedure although you will only be in hospital for one / two days.

How to prepare yourself for surgery in a practical way:

- It is helpful to do jaw exercises starting a few months prior to surgery. These include opening and closing the jaw while keeping the front teeth aligned (top to bottom). Do this in front of the mirror at least twice a day, 30 stretches at a time. A physiotherapist specializing in the jaw will be able to help you with these.
- Please refrain from using medication like Disprin, Arnica or other medication that might influence blood clotting.

What to get ready at home before you go to hospital:

- Beanbag, which can be used as a hot or cold pack. This is available at pharmacies and health shops.
- Sport injury ice packs for the freezer
- Liquidizer / blender
- Food that is easily liquidated into a relatively liquid consistency.
- Clear soup, fruit juice and canned fruit like peaches and apricots can be blended with yogurt for a refreshing pudding.
- Food supplements such as Ensure, Nutrishake or Herbalife. This can be mixed with water or fruit juice. (Try to avoid milk in the first few days, as the phlegm build up can be a problem.)
- Remember to inform your family members and relatives about what's to happen so they can be prepared to support you.

What to expect when you wake up after surgery:

- Your jaw will be very tightly closed
- Decongestions, like Drixine or Iliadin nasal spray will be supplied in order to help you to breath easily through your nose. No not hesitate to ask the nurses for assistance with this.

- Your face will be swollen. Cold packs will be supplied for this. The physiotherapist will treat you soon after the surgery and the next day before discharge from hospital.
- You will have a drip through which you will receive anti-inflammatories and antibiotics. It will be removed the morning after the surgery.
- Adequate painkillers will be supplied.
- Make sure that any medication which you have to take can either be crushed or mixed with water or can be obtained in a liquid form. Take these with you to the hospital.
- You will be given painkillers as well as antibiotics to take home. Make sure that you drink something substantial before taking this medication.

When you get home:

- Make sure you have enough pillows – it is easier to breathe and also helps for swelling when your head is elevated. Stay as upright as possible.
- Regularly apply hot and cold packs to your swollen and painful areas as supplied and instructed by the physiotherapist.
- Make sure you drink plenty of water.
- During the first three or four days at home you will feel quite uncomfortable and weak. Try not to talk too much; this can cause painful spasms of the facial muscles.
- Earache is usually due to referred pain, once again, the hot and cold packs will help for this.
- You will be able to open your jaw slowly during the first week. Do not expect to be able to open immediately. Physiotherapy will be prescribed for this.
- After this you will start with a soft diet, fish, pasta, mince, chicken, etc.
- Two weeks sick leave will be granted, try to take the whole two-week off, as the rehabilitation process is slow.

Although complications are rare, it can sometimes occur. Please report any unusual reaction to my staff or me. The same goes for any questions that you might have.

Good luck and we wish you a speedy recovery