



Patient & Family Guide  
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# After Your Wired Jaw Surgery (4.2 Plastic Surgery)



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# After Your Wired Jaw Surgery (4.2 Plastic Surgery)

After your surgery, you will notice ‘bars’ on your top and bottom teeth. The head of your bed will be raised and you may be placed on your side immediately after surgery. The surgery team will check on you each morning.

## **Wires and wire cutters**

Cross wires or elastics will be on both “bars” to hold your mouth closed.

As a precaution, a set of wire cutters will be at your bedside at all times. These will be used only in an emergency situation.

## **Comfort and pain management**

- Expect some swelling, bruising, nasal congestion, and mild bleeding.
- The head of your bed will be raised to help lower swelling in your face.
- You will be offered pain medication to help with any discomfort you may have.
- You will be offered ice packs to help lower swelling and pain.

- You may be on humidified (damp) air to help prevent nasal congestion.
- Your lips may get dry and/or chapped. We can give you a petroleum-based jelly (Vaseline®) if you are not on oxygen. You are welcome to use your own lip balm.

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

- If you feel nauseous, let a staff member know. We can give you medication to help with your nausea.
- If you do vomit, try not to panic. There is enough space between your teeth for the vomit to pass through. The nurse may help you lean forward and use suctioning equipment to get the vomit out of your mouth.

**What are your questions?**

**Please ask. We are here to help you.**

## Nutrition and diet

- You will be on intravenous (IV) fluids to keep you hydrated until it is safe for you to have a liquid diet.
- It is important that you get good nutrition. The dietitian will meet with you to talk about a liquid diet. If someone else cooks your meals , try to have them at this meeting.
- You may be given supplements to help you get enough nutrition.
- **Do not use straws until after your wires are taken out.** Using straws might damage the wires or stitches in your mouth.

## Mouth care

It is important to gently rinse your mouth often to keep it clean.

- Rinse your mouth with an antiseptic rinse 4 times a day and as needed.

## Smoking

It is in your best interest to stop smoking for as long as possible after surgery. Ask staff for resources about quitting smoking or nicotine replacement therapy.

Smoking can slow down healing or lead to an infection. If you smoke, you should try to avoid smoking until your jaw has healed.



## When you go home

### Diet and nutrition

- You will be on a liquid diet for 4 to 6 weeks or as directed by your surgeon.
- You will need a food blender or food processor to make your meals.

### Medications

- You may be sent home on antibiotics to prevent an infection.
- You will be given a prescription for pain medication if needed.



## Mouth care at home

- It is important to keep your mouth clean and free of food debris.
- Rinse your mouth with an antiseptic rinse 4 times a day and as directed 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 continue to use lip balm.
- You may use dental wax to protect your lips from the wires. You can find dental wax in the oral health section of your local drugstore.



## Emergency situations and wire cutters

- We will loan you a set of wire cutters to take home. You will be shown how to properly use them in case of an emergency.
- Please return the wire cutters at your last visit with your surgeon.

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

- Fever, chills, or vomiting that is new
- A lot of pain or swelling that is not getting better or is getting worse
- Severe (really bad) nausea or vomiting
- A hard time swallowing or breathing
- Bleeding from your wound or your nose
- Loss of several elastics or wires that makes your jaw shift

### Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

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