

## **Jaw Fracture**

You have a fracture of the jaw (mandible bone). This can be minor break in the bone with nothing out of place or a major break with a shifting of the bone out of place. This causes swelling, pain and bruising in the lower face. There may be a cut and bleeding inside your mouth.

Most jaw fractures are stable and can be treated by wiring the upper and lower teeth together. This prevents the fracture from moving while the bone heals (usually about 4 weeks). Depending on the type of fracture, surgery may be required to put the broken bone back in place.

A blow to the face forceful enough to cause a jaw fracture may also cause a concussion or more serious brain injury. Therefore, watch for the warning signs below.

## **Home Care:**

- 1) If your jaw was wired shut, it is important that you be able to open the wires in any emergency that makes it difficult to breathe, such as vomiting, extreme coughing or choking. Therefore, you must carry a pair of small wire-cutters with you at all times . Keep them near you bed at night. Be sure you know which wires to cut in case this is necessary. If you don't know, ask your doctor.
- 2) If a bandage was wrapped around your jaw, leave this in place, even when you are sleeping. Do this until you are seen by the referral doctor. The purpose of this is to keep the fractured bones from moving until you see the oral surgeon.
- 3) EATING : If your jaw was wired shut, you may follow a full liquid diet: liquids, blended drinks (smoothies), through a straw. If your jaw was not wired shut, you may follow a full liquid diet plus soft foods. Do not try to open your mouth wide or chew on solid food.
- 4) Apply an ice pack (ice cubes in a plastic bag, wrapped in a towel) over the injured area for 20 minutes every 1-2 hours the first day. Continue with ice packs 3-4 times a day for the next two days, then as needed for the relief of pain and swelling.
- 5) You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) to control pain, unless another pain medicine was prescribed. [ NOTE : If you have chronic liver or kidney disease or ever had a stomach ulcer or GI bleeding, talk with your doctor before using these medicines.] Use the children's liquid form if your jaw was wired closed.
- 6) If you were given antibiotics to prevent an infection, take them until the prescription is finished.

## **Follow Up**

with the referral doctor in one week, or as advised by our staff.

[NOTE: A radiologist will review any X-rays that were taken. We will notify you of any new findings that may affect your care.]

## **Get Prompt Medical Attention**

if any of the following occur:

Increasing facial swelling or pain

Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider

Inability to swallow liquids

Bleeding from your mouth or gums

If you cut the wires placed on your teeth

Repeated vomiting

Severe or worsening headache or dizziness

Unusual drowsiness, or unable to awaken as usual

Confusion or change in behavior or speech

Convulsion (seizure)