

# TMJ (Temporomandibular Joint) Arthroscopy

TMJ Arthroscopy is a procedure performed through one or more small skin incisions in front of the ear. A small telescope-like instrument is inserted through the incision and directly into the jaw joint to inspect the inside of the joint. Occasionally a second skin incision is required for manipulating a second instrument. If possible, fibrous adhesions (scar tissue within the jaw joint) will be removed.

This procedure is used for treatment and/or diagnosis of the Temporomandibular joint. Although the procedure may be sufficient to alleviate some of the joint symptoms, a more involved procedure may be required, depending on the findings of your surgery.

## MEDICATIONS

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You may have received a prescription for pain medication and or anti-inflammatory medications. **Please have the prescription filled at a pharmacy on your way home.**

## SWELLING AND STIFFNESS

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Swelling or stiffness may occur following your procedure. This is nature's way of aiding the healing process by splinting and resting the area. Ice packs applied intermittently (20 to 30 minutes every hour) is usually beneficial.

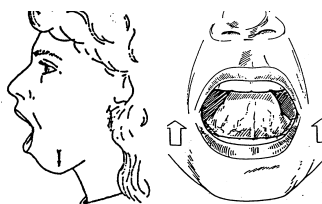
Return of normal jaw movement may take up to 3 weeks; during this time we recommend jaw exercises to reduce stiffness. These should start the day after surgery.

## JAW EXERCISES

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Exercising the jaw maintains mandibular mobility as well as helps decrease pain and swelling. Avoid overstretching of the joint and muscle, this may cause an inflammatory process. All exercises should be performed slowly and comfortably and should not cause sharp pain. Before beginning exercises, warm your face muscles with warm moist heat. A warm wet face cloth applied to each side of your face for 15 minutes before beginning exercises. Exercises should be performed 10 - 20 times each, 3 times a day.

1. Vertical opening: The tip of the tongue is placed on the roof of the mouth. Open and close your mouth slowly maintaining a straight midline jaw position.
2. Lateral excursion: With teeth slightly apart, slide your bottom jaw sideways to the right (using the borders of the teeth to limit the distance moved), return to centre, and then repeat the same process to the left.
3. Protrusive or gliding motion: With teeth slightly apart, slide your bottom jaw forward until your bottom teeth overlap in front of your top teeth.
4. Isometric jaw exercise: Put your finger under your chin and try to open your mouth against slight resistance. Open your mouth about a half-inch with your finger still pressed against the chin--then close.



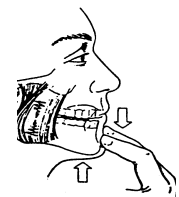
Vertical opening



Lateral excursion



Protrusive or gliding



Isometric exercise

**You will be given instruction for further exercises or stretching as well as physiotherapy when you return the day after your surgery. Please follow the instructions given to you.**

## PAIN

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Post-operative pain is a normal response of the body to any surgical procedure. The local anaesthetic or freezing that was administered during your surgery may last up to six hours. It is advisable to have pain medication on board prior to the freezing wearing off and pain is actually experienced. You will be given pain medication before you leave, please take another within 2 hours.

## DIET AND NUTRITION

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Your body requires adequate fluids and nourishment. It may be necessary to start with a liquid or very soft diet and you may be advised to remain on this diet for a period of time before gradually working your way back to a regular diet. Please follow the instructions given on your day of surgery.

## SUTURES

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Sutures are routinely used. These will need to be removed in 6 days. In addition to your sutures you will have steri-strips in place. These remain in place until sutures are removed. You will be provided with replacement steri-strips should they lift or require replacement.

You will also have a head dressing in place when you wake up. This will be removed in our office the day following your surgery. Please follow any additional instructions given on the day of surgery.

## FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT

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You will require follow-up appointments after your surgery. These appointments may already be made for you, or you may be instructed to contact our office to schedule them. It is important you attend these appointments to assess proper healing and removal of head dressing and sutures. **Please follow the instruction given you the day of your surgery.** If the prearranged appointment(s) are not suitable, please contact our office to change your date or time.

## INTRAVENOUS SEDATION AND GENERAL ANAESTHETIC PATIENTS

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Patients who have had general anaesthetic may experience muscle pains especially around the neck and shoulders, but this can occur anywhere including the chest, back, legs and arms. The pain is often like that which occurs after heavy exercise. It is caused by an anaesthetic drug, and although it is inconvenient and uncomfortable, it is not unusual or dangerous to experience these symptoms. The stiffness and discomfort usually lasts for only two to three days, but can linger for up to one week. It is best treated by rest, heat and your post-operative pain pills. Patients having a general anaesthetic will have had a nasal breathing tube while they were asleep. It may appear that you have had a nosebleed or your nose may be stuffy. It is recommended that you **NOT** blow your nose for several days. Nasal sprays or decongestants may be used to relieve these symptoms. It is not uncommon to have a sore throat from this tube. The sore throat is best treated with your pain medication, plenty of fluids and lozenges such as Bradasol™ or Screts™. If discomfort or pain persists at IV site for more than 2 weeks please call our office.

## HERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT MUST BE OBSERVED

**DO NOT** leave the patient alone until the morning following surgery.

**ABSOLUTELY NO** driving or operating any machinery for the first 24 hours following surgery, or as long as you're taking prescription pain medication.

**ABSOLUTELY NO** alcohol or recreational drugs for two weeks following surgery, or as long as you're taking prescription medications.

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**If you have any questions or problems, do not hesitate to call our office at 454-6565 or 1-800-379-9474.** If your call is not answered by the answering service, hang up and call again in five minutes. We apologize for this inconvenience as the lines may be occupied by other callers. There is an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon on call **ALL HOURS OF THE DAY.**

**WE PREFER THAT YOU CALL OUR OFFICE FIRST RATHER THAN YOUR OWN DENTIST OR FAMILY DOCTOR. However, if you are experiencing severe bleeding or breathing problems requiring IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, please proceed to the nearest Emergency Department or Dial 911.**