Post op Instructions following Jaw Wiring Surgery

1. On Arriving Home:
   a. You may be prescribed several medications depending on the nature of your surgery. It is important to follow the directions for all of the medications which you are prescribed. Every effort will be made to give all medicines in the liquid form.
   b. It is recommended that you sleep with your head elevated on two or three pillows. This helps to decrease the swelling in your face and also will make it easier for you to breathe.
   c. It will be beneficial to apply ice for the first 48 hours after surgery. You may use commercial ice packs or place ice in a plastic bag and apply to face alternating 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off. After 48 hours, heat may be used in decreasing swelling. A heating pad, hot water bottle, or washcloth with hot water can be used. Be careful not to make the water so hot as to scald the skin. Swelling typically takes 10-14 days to resolve. After the first 4-7 days, swelling should begin to decrease.

2. General Instructions:
   a. Diet: The treatment of your broken jaw will affect the way you eat. When your jaws are wired together you will be limited to a liquid or blenderized diet. You will be provided with a recipe book called "Dinner Through a Straw" which will give you recipes for blenderized foods. A blender or food processor will be helpful in preparing your diet.
      Commercial nutritional supplements such as Ensure, Boost, and various Protein drinks can be used as a way to increase calories and protein.
   b. Oral Hygiene: It is important to maintain good oral hygiene to aid in healing. A soft bristled small toothbrush should be used around wires and elastics, as they tend to trap food particles. You may be prescribed a mouth rinse to aid in keeping your mouth clean.
   c. Avoid doing anything that requires heavy lifting, pushing or straining while your jaws are wired together.
   d. Do not try to work your jaw back and forth against the wires. This will loosen the wires and teeth and prevent the bones from healing.
   e. Avoid water related activities such as swimming and water skiing while your jaws are wired because it’s hard to clear water out of your nose and airway.
   f. Do not drink alcoholic beverages while your jaws are wired.
   g. Your jaws are held together by elastics that are hooked to the wires on your upper and lower teeth. Over time elastics can loosen, fall off or break. Losing a few elastics is not a problem as long as you cannot open the mouth. If you find that you are able to open your
mouth due to loss of elastics, keep your teeth together, and call the office so we can add more elastics.

h. You may use saline nasal spray as frequently as necessary to help keep your nose clear.

i. It is quite common for the wires to irritate gum and cheek tissue. If this happens apply some of the wax that you have been provided with over the area of wire that is irritating you.

3. **Emergencies:**
   A common question you may have is “What if I get sick and my jaws are wired together?” **DON’T PANIC** Since your wires will only allow you to ingest liquid, you will only vomit liquid. Simply bend over and allow the liquid to run between the spaces around your teeth. **If you believe it is an absolute emergency**, you may cut the wires, but this is only to be done as a last resort as cutting the wires may lead to infection and improper healing which could result in the need for another operation.

4. **Follow up:**
   It is absolutely critical that you attend your scheduled follow-up appointments, as you will need to be evaluated regularly until your Doctor is assured adequate healing has occurred, at which time removal of the wires and elastics will be scheduled.

   If you have any questions or concerns, call the Recovery Room 242-2600
   (24 hour Answering Service)
   If you are admitted to hospital for any reason within 10 days of treatment, please notify our facility.