

C R A I G

FACIAL PLASTIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY OTOLARYNGOLOGY

POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR UPPP PATIENTS (UVULOPALATOPHARYNGOPLASTY)

General Recommendations: The most important instruction we give our patients following a UPPP is for the patient to eat and drink appropriately. This can be a problem due to pain after the surgery.

- The more you eat and drink, the less pain you will experience.
- During the active swallowing, the throat is kept cleaner. Therefore, decreasing the chance of infection and postoperative bleeding.
- It is also important to avoid excessive physical activity.
- There is a two week healing cycle following a UPPP during which we need to take precautions. We will go into this in greater detail, but this time frame needs to be kept in mind.
- Medications will be given to reduce pain and an antibiotic will be used to reduce the likelihood of infection.

EATING AND DRINKING

- The diet can be very liberal following a UPPP provided it is prepared correctly.
- **AVOID ANY HARD OR CRUSTY FOOD FOR TWO WEEKS. This includes crusty food such as potato chips, other chips, popcorn, hard crust of bread, etc.**
- Most other foods are OK if you will chop them up. This includes: pancakes, eggs, chopped chicken, chopped hamburger. You can start eating like this the very first day of surgery.
- In general, we like to see the patients eating as soon as possible. This will reduce pain and allow for quicker healing. The patient should drink fluids proportionate to their size. An adult can take a quart and a half or more.
- Please avoid eating or drinking dairy products such as milk, ice cream, etc. for the first four days following surgery. Dairy products tend to make saliva thicker and more difficult to swallow something we want to avoid. After four days, these dairy products can be used.

- Instead of ice cream, popsicles are recommended. They can be crushed or eaten as is, providing a cool and soothing effect on the throat.
- Chewing gum is also helpful, due to the role active swallowing plays in the healing process.
- Other than the choice of dairy, beverage choice is left up to the patient. Soft drinks, tea, and fruit juices are all acceptable. You may choose to avoid some fruit juices as they may sting the throat. However, if you prefer them, they are okay to drink.
- This aggressive eating and drinking should continue for full two weeks following surgery.
- If eating and drinking does not occur as mentioned above, the following will likely result: There will be more throat pain, which may spread into the ears. Body temperature may start to rise up to 101 or higher. There will be an increased chance of post-operative bleeding.

BAD BREATH

- The first two weeks after surgery, most all patients will have bad breath. As the healing process occurs, this will go away.
- If you happen to look in the throat, you will notice that there are two large yellow/white patches on either side of the throat. This does not represent an infection. Rather, it simply is the appearance of a wet scab over the tonsil bed and is the normal post-operative appearance.
- On the other hand, if there is a lot of debris in the tonsil bed and excessive mounding of crusts, this usually indicates that the patient is not eating and drinking sufficiently.

POST OPERATIVE PAIN AND MEDICATIONS

- **There is significant pain after a UPPP for the first ten days.**
- The patient will have both good and bad days during this time period and thereafter every day is definitely better.
- On occasion, the first few days after surgery are fairly easy and the more significant pain begins on the fourth or fifth day. Be sure to take your pain medication on a "round the clock" basis.
- It is very important for the entire two week healing period to eat and drink according to the above guidelines. This will greatly diminish postoperative discomfort.
- Some throat pain can be felt in the ear. We term this type of pain as "referred pain". It is important to control pain with the narcotic pain medications prescribed by Dr. Craig.

- You should avoid medications such as Aspirin, Advil, and other Ibuprofen drugs and Vitamin E postoperatively. This can cause thinning of the blood and other bleeding episodes.
- Some other side effects that are more often seen with narcotic pain medications include nausea, constipation and bad dreams.
- It is helpful to take prescribed pain medication, antibiotics and steroids (Prednisone) with food or on a full stomach to avoid gastric upset.
- Taking medication on a 'round-the-clock basis, the first couple of days post operatively, will help relieve discomfort and allow the patient to eat and sleep better.

HUMIDIFIERS

- We recommend using a humidifier in the bedroom for two weeks postoperatively. This will prevent the throat from drying out excessively. This is a problem at night especially. Keeping a glass of water at the bed stand is also helpful, allowing the patient to drink at night when he/she wakes up. However, it is extremely important that you follow the cleaning instructions for your humidifier. Some manufacturers sell cleaners which help to prevent the growth of bacteria and fungus. A dirty, moldy humidifier will definitely hinder your post-operative recovery.

POST OPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

- For two weeks after surgery, excessive physical activity should be avoided. This includes weightlifting, or lifting any heavy objects, aerobics, and strenuous bicycle riding.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL DR. CRAIG AT HIS OFFICE OR AT THE NUMBERS PROVIDED BELOW:

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