

FACIAL FRACTURES

(Mandible fracture, orbital blowout fracture, tripod fracture, dentoalveolar fracture)

Purpose: Facial fractures sustained from trauma usually require repair within a 2-3 week period of time if the bones are out of alignment. If the bones are allowed to heal in an abnormal position, serious complications can occur. If the mandible is involved, abnormal alignment could result in TMJ disorder and jaw pain. Also, an unrepaired jaw could get seriously infected. If the orbital bones heal improperly, it could result in problems opening the jaw. Often, multiple facial bones are broken at the same time. Sometimes the nasal bones need to be repaired, and sometimes the nasal septum required repair. If the trauma is extensive, further surgery may be required at another time to endoscopically open the sinuses, remove wires from the jaw, or remove plates used in the repair (rare).

Procedure: The surgery is done in the hospital under general anesthesia. Every effort is made to hide the incision in the mouth or in the eye so that scars will not be apparent after the surgery. The fractures are identified and then the bones are placed into their original positions, whenever possible. The bones are held in place with small titanium plates and screws. Sometimes the patient's jaw has to be "wired shut" if there is a mandible fracture. These wires come out after 2-6 weeks. The patient then goes to the recovery room. Patients typically have to stay 1-2 nights after surgery. There may be vision check throughout the night if bones near the eye were fixed.

Recovery: Patients will have a recurrence of their swelling and bruising after the surgery. Sensation over the face may be gone after surgery, although this is usually temporary. You will be asked to keep your head elevated with an ice pack on your face. You will likely have to be out of work/school for 1-2 weeks. You will have significant pain, and you will receive narcotic pain medication for this. You will also be given an antibiotic. Steroids are sometimes used to decrease swelling and lessen pain. The antibiotics and steroids should be taken until finished. You may be asked to see a dentist to have him/her evaluate your teeth.

Risks and Complications

Despite our best efforts, sometimes the facial bones cannot be placed in their original position. In these cases, cosmetic deformity may result.

15. Any surgery on the jaw bone can result in loss of teeth, infection, tooth injury, or failure to achieve proper alignment. This is rare in non-complicated cases.
16. Any surgery on the eye can result in blindness. This is very rare complication, and immediate repeat surgery may be required if a blood clot develops post operatively. Diplopia, or double vision, can occur after the surgery (particularly when looking up) and is usually temporary. It can be permanent.
17. The nerves responsible for feeling on the face are often involved with facial fractures. These nerves can be damaged or cut during the surgery. The loss of feeling may be permanent.
18. With any surgery, bleeding, and infection are always a possibility. Every effort is made to minimize these complications before, during, and after the operation.

We ask that you sign below to indicate that you have read, understand and accept the risks and complications of this operation. Alternative types of treatment have been discussed with me and I want to go ahead with the surgery.