



Dr. G. Lee Watkins

### Post-Op Instructions for Hyoid Suspension

1. Sleep with your head elevated 45 degrees for the first 3 days post-op. This will help tremendously to reduce swelling and discomfort. Recliners are great for this.
2. Holding ice in the mouth while letting it melt and cool the surgical area can help with pain control. Doing this for the first 2-3 days after surgery is like applying ice to a sprained ankle. It is one of the safest ways to reduce pain and can make the healing process easier.
3. Due to the pain and swelling that is expected after surgery, you'll most likely only be able to tolerate a liquid diet for the first 4-5 days. Push yourself to drink fluids, even if it is painful. It is important to drink sweetened, vitamin enhanced drinks such as juice or Gatorade. Because you won't be meeting your usual nutrition during the first week, drinking only water will quickly deplete your electrolyte balance and cause other problems like nausea and low blood sugar. Protein and fat are also needed to promote healing and maintain energy levels. Try to incorporate milk, protein drinks and meal replacement shakes into your daily routine as well. As your recovery continues, you can transition to soft solid foods such as eggs, yogurt, or mashed potatoes. You should be able to tolerate a normal diet by 2 weeks post-op. During the recovery period, you should avoid foods with sharp edges such as chips because these can cause bleeding. Otherwise, you can advance your diet accordingly.
4. Initially, you may experience a small amount of regurgitation of liquids through the nose. This resolves within the first 7-10 days.
5. Do not use mouthwashes, lozenges, or throat sprays. Many of these contain alcohol products that can irritate the lining of the mouth or numbing medication that can result in post-op complications.
6. Some ear and/or jaw pain is common after any surgery involving the throat. This is only referred pain due to tissue trauma/swelling of the throat. Chewing gum is very helpful in alleviating this discomfort.
7. Avoid any strenuous activity for the first 4 weeks. This may raise heart rate and blood pressure, and it will also increase swelling or cause bleeding. This includes straining to lift things (including kids), pushing, pulling and vigorous exercise. Walking is encouraged.
8. Controlling your pain is important for breathing, healing, and being able to swallow enough food to maintain your nutrition. Try not to let the pain become intolerable before you take your medication. Your pain should be little to none by day 14 post-op. To maintain adequate post-op pain control, be sure to take your pain medication(s) exactly as prescribed, in addition to following these other instructions.

For any problems, questions, or concerns, please call our office at 318-716-1111. If it is after hours or on the weekend, you will be connected to our answering service that will then connect you to Dr. Watkins.

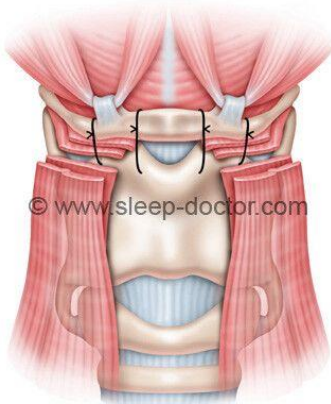
## HYOID SUSPENSION

### WHAT IS THE HYOID BONE

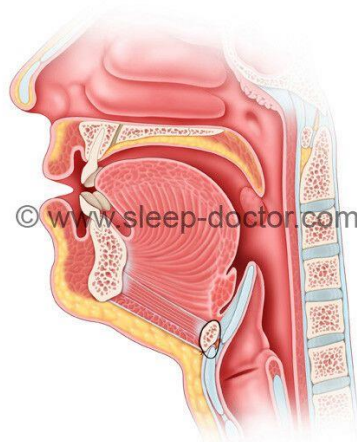
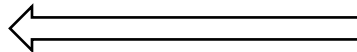
The hyoid bone is a U-shaped bone in the neck located above the level of the thyroid cartilage (Adam's Apple) that has attachments to muscles of the tongue as well as other muscles and soft tissues around the throat. The hyoid bone is free to move around somewhat instead of being firmly anchored in position. The mobility of the hyoid bone may allow the structures that attach to it to collapse, blocking the airway during sleep. This results in sleep apnea.

### HOW IS THE HYOID SUSPENSION PROCEDURE PERFORMED?

This procedure is performed for patients with obstructive sleep apnea, and it is performed in the operating room under general anesthesia. A small (usually 7-8 cm or 3 inches) skin incision is made, ideally in a natural neck skin crease to camouflage the scar. Four stitches are placed around the hyoid bone and the upper portion of the thyroid cartilage to stabilize the hyoid bone. The skin incision is closed with stitches, and usually a small drain is placed for 1-2 days to allow any fluid to escape without being trapped underneath the skin.



The hyoid bone is pulled forward and secured to the Adam's Apple with four stitches.



Side view of the head and neck after the hyoid procedure

