

## **INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS WITH CHANGES IN SENSATION OF THE LIP, CHIN, OR TONGUE AFTER MAXILLOFACIAL/ ORAL SURGERY**

Oral surgery, like any other surgery, has certain inherent risks and limitations that may occur despite the experience and skill of the doctor. You may remember discussing this at the time of the consultation. Following your surgery, we would like to explain any changes of sensation in the lip, chin, or tongue that you may be experiencing.

### **WHAT CAUSED IT?**

Because the nerves that supply these regions are close to the area where surgery was performed, the nerves may not function normally for a while afterwards. These nerves affect sensation only and not movement. The most common cause of injury is pressure from the root during removal of the tooth. Occasionally, hooks or curves on the root may tear some of the nerve fibers. When the nerve is especially close to the site of the surgery, it could be nicked or cut. And, sometimes sensation is affected for no apparent reason.

### **HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

The likelihood that a change in sensation and how long it will last can depend on many factors, including position of the tooth, the nerve, or the difficulty of the procedure. The duration of the condition is unpredictable and different in each case. It may last a few days, weeks or months and in very rare instances may be permanent. In the majority of cases, the sensory loss gradually fades away although you may not be aware of any immediate improvement. This is especially true when the nerve is taking longer to come back. For this reason it is important for you to keep your follow-up appointments so that we may advise you of your specific circumstances.

### **HOW CAN I TELL IF I AM GETTING BETTER?**

During nerve recovery, you may notice changes such as tingling, as if a local anesthetic is wearing off. Other sensations may also be present. Do not be alarmed, this is often a positive sign. It is important for you to help us in recording any changes in your symptoms so that we may better answer your questions and advise you as to your prognosis.

### **WHAT IF IT DOESN'T GET BETTER? CAN ANYTHING BE DONE?**

If there has been absolutely no improvement in six months, then depending on your case, microsurgical repair could be considered. Your doctor can further council you on this possibility and you may be referred to another specialist who is experienced and knowledgeable in this area.

### **IN SUMMARY**

Remember, in the overwhelming number of instances of altered sensation, all or most of the normal sensation will return. If residual symptoms do remain, they are usually so minor they do not constitute a problem. By keeping in close contact with this office we are better able to advise you throughout your recovery process to insure optimum results.