



## POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS

**PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.** The after-effects of oral surgery vary per individual, so not all of these instructions may apply. Please feel free to call our office any time should you have any questions, or are experiencing any unusual symptoms following your treatment.

### **DAY OF SURGERY:**

**ORAL HYGIENE AND CARE** Do not disturb the surgical area today. Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze pack that we have initially placed over the surgical area, making sure that they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not being controlled. This is important to allow blood clot formation on the surgery site. The gauze may be changed when necessary and/or repositioned for comfort. You may brush your teeth gently, carefully avoiding the surgical site. You should rinse gently with warm salt water. DO NOT SMOKE for at least 48 hours, since it is detrimental to the healing process.

Start rinsing your mouth with a warm salt water rinse (1/2 tsp. salt with 1 cup water) every 3-4 hours no sooner than one day after surgery. Continue this for 2-3 days. You may start gentle tooth brushing the day after surgery or after bleeding is controlled. It is imperative to keep your mouth clean, since an accumulation of food or debris may promote infection.

**BLEEDING** Some bleeding is normal and blood-tinged saliva may be present for up to 48 hours. For the first two hours immediately following surgery, maintain firm biting pressure over the wound. Bleeding should be controlled at this point. Uncontrolled bleeding means you will see bright red blood flowing from the wound. If bleeding persists, replace the saturated gauze with fresh gauze, repositioning it to ensure that pressure is being exerted on the surgery site. If there is continued bleeding of thick bright red blood, apply a moist tea bag and continue to bite firmly for a half hour. The tea bag should be soaked in hot water then squeezed dry and wrapped in a moist gauze. If bleeding still persists, return to our office for an evaluation.

**SWELLING OR BRUISING** Swelling is to be expected, and usually reaches it's **maximum in 48 hours**. To minimize swelling, cold packs or ice bags wrapped in a towel should be applied to the face adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 20 minutes on then removed for 20 minutes during the first 12-24 hours after surgery. If you were prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed. After 48 hours, it is usually best to switch from using the cold pack to applying a moist heat or heating pad to the same area, until swelling has receded. Bruising may also occur, but should disappear after a few days. Tightness of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening the mouth. This should disappear within 7 days. Normal talking and jaw movement will actually help healing and recovery.

**DIET** Proper nutrition is essential for successful healing. Take meals at your usual times. Eat any nourishing food that can be eaten comfortably. Confine the first day's food intake to bland liquids and soft foods. Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds or popcorn, which may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days, you may progress to more solid foods. Do not be afraid to move the jaw naturally while eating and talking, as this will help stimulate the healing process and aid in avoiding sore muscles. If you have any health condition that requires a specific diet,

such as diabetes, maintain your normal diet as much as possible following your physician's instructions.

**PAIN AND MEDICATIONS** We want you to be as pain free as possible. Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. Begin taking the prescribed pain medication immediately following surgery. This should be done before the numb sensation wears off. The local anesthetic administered during your surgery normally has a 3-hour duration, and it may be difficult to control the pain once the anesthetic wears off. Continue taking pain medication according to the hourly schedule on the prescription for one full day, then as needed for pain the following days. Taking the pain medication with soft food and a large volume of water will lessen any side effects of nausea or stomach upset. If pain or swelling persists past the first 48 hours and is not improving, please contact our office. If you develop a rash or have difficulty breathing after taking the medication, do not continue to take it and go to the hospital immediately. Remember: Do not drive automobiles, operate machinery, or perform any hazardous tasks while taking narcotic pain medication.

If you were prescribed an antibiotic and are currently taking oral contraceptives, you should use an alternate method of birth control for the remainder of this cycle.

**ORTHODONTIC APPLIANCES** If you wear orthodontic appliances, replace them immediately after surgery unless otherwise instructed. If these appliances are left out of the mouth for any length of time, it is often difficult or impossible to reinsert them.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING DAYS:**

**ORAL HYGIENE:** Don't neglect your oral hygiene. It is essential that you keep your mouth clean after oral surgery to minimize the risk of infection. Rinse your mouth using **warm salt-water rinses** (Avoid mouthwashes that have Alcohol). Resume gentle tooth brushing and flossing routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may prevent rigorous brushing of all areas, but make every effort to clean your teeth within your comfort level.

**SURGICAL AREA CARE** After the first 2 days, apply warm compresses to the skin overlying areas of swelling for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe these tender areas. This will also aid in reducing swelling and stiffness.

#### **OTHER POSSIBLE POST-SURGERY EFFECTS**

**SKIN DISCOLORATION** This may be expected, and is usually limited to the neck or cheek area near the surgical site. If discoloration occurs, it may take a week for this to completely disappear.

**NUMBNESS** Loss of sensation of the lip and cheek may occur, usually following lower wisdom teeth removal. This is usually temporary and disappears within a few days or weeks. Occasionally, some numbness may persist for months, due to the close association of the roots of the teeth to the nerve that supplies sensation to these areas described.

**IN GENERAL** It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. If you do not see steady improvement during the first few days after surgery, or you notice a sour, bitter or bad taste that was not there immediately after surgery, please call our office at (512)491-5244.