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## Post-Operative Care Instructions & Information

Proper post-operative care is very important after undergoing oral, periodontal and implant surgery. Failure to follow post-op instructions can result in a delayed recovery. Below are our general post-op care instructions. Please be aware that these instructions may be modified by your doctor.

### BLEEDING & BRUISING

The gauze pads inserted by your doctor after surgery act as a protective dressing and should remain in place for up to 1 hour. During this period continue applying gentle pressure to the surgical site. Some oozing of blood is expected, however, excessive bleeding is NOT normal. Usually, excessive bleeding can be controlled by placing clean, moistened gauze or a moistened tea bag placed directly over the surgical site and applying firm pressure to it for approximately 30 minutes or until the bleeding has stopped. Please call us if bleeding continues. Depending on the nature of the procedure, the patient's blood chemistry and medications, bruising and discoloration may be visible for 3-5 days following surgery. Do not be alarmed. This reaction is normal.

### DISCOMFORT

Your doctor may prescribe medication, which is to be taken as directed. Some discomfort is normal and can typically be controlled with over-the-counter anti-inflammatory drugs. You may take 800mg Ibuprofen (i.e. Motrin® or Advil®) for the first 3-5 days and is usually more effective than prescription narcotics for pain relief. If you develop itching, redness or swelling anywhere on your body, stop taking the medication immediately and call your doctor. You may be experiencing an allergic reaction to the drugs.

### SWELLING

You may experience some swelling, which is usually the cause of discomfort. Typically, swelling increases during the first 2 days, and then subsides. Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory drugs, like ibuprofen (i.e. Motrin® or Advil®), are effective in minimizing swelling. Swelling can also be controlled by the use of ice and heat.

*ICE:* apply ice to the cheeks for 10-15 minutes on and 10-15 minutes off for the first and second day.

*HEAT:* apply warm, moist heat to the jaws on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day following surgery, as needed.

### NUTRITION

After approximately one week the gums usually have healed enough to allow you to resume a normal diet. During the first week after surgery, avoid sticky foods and food with small, hard pieces. Foods to avoid include popcorn, poppy seeds, sesame seeds, nuts, chips and hard pretzels. Do not make an effort to eat on only one side of your mouth since food will inevitably get everywhere in your mouth. Also, avoid using straws, as the pressure created by its use may disrupt the healing process.

### ORAL HYGIENE

Do not brush your teeth near or upon the surgical site until your next visit. On the first morning after surgery, begin frequent rinsing with mild, warm salt water or the mouth wash given to you. You also may receive a prescription for an antibacterial mouth rinse to be taken as directed by your doctor. If your surgery included a bone graft, do not use *Listerine®*. It is particularly important to rinse after you eat. Good oral hygiene is important for proper healing of the wound. The cleaner your mouth, the quicker and better it

### NUMBNESS

Sometimes surgery is performed near the nerves in the lower jaw. Surgical trauma and/ or swelling may disturb the nerve and may cause numbness of your chin, lower lip and the teeth on that side. It is impossible to determine the duration of the numbness but it is rarely permanent.

## ANTIBIOTICS

If you are given a prescription for antibiotics, it is critical that you take them exactly as directed. Stopping the antibiotic early and/or skipping doses will not only reduce its effectiveness, but also increases your risk for developing a more severe infection. Some antibiotics can cause gastrointestinal upset, a normal side-effect; however, if the gastrointestinal upset progresses to a severe diarrhea, call your doctor immediately. If you develop itching, redness or swelling anywhere on your body, stop taking the antibiotics immediately and call your doctor. You may be experiencing an allergic reaction to the antibiotic. Most antibiotics can be taken with or without food.

## ACTIVITIES

You may immediately resume normal routine daily activities unless otherwise instructed by your doctor. During the first 1-2 days avoid exercise or any vigorous activity that may elevate your blood pressure. Do not engage in vigorous physical activities and sports until the surgical sites feel comfortable, swelling has stopped and you are able to resume a normal diet. In particular, do not engage in contact sports or play musical wind instruments for 1 week after surgery.

## SINUS PRECAUTIONS

For several weeks following sinus grafting procedures, avoid any action that creates negative pressure in the sinuses. It is best to sneeze with your mouth open, minimize heavy lifting, and blow your nose very gently, without applying pressure to your nostrils with your fingers. Avoid flying and the use of straws. Some bleeding from the nostrils is normal. Your doctor may prescribe a decongestant for you.

## STITCHES

Some stitches dissolve on their own and at varying times, and some must be removed at a follow up visit. Stitches can unravel after about 7 days and can become a nuisance. This unraveling is usually harmless and will not affect the outcome of the surgery.

The stitches used for today's procedure are:

RESORBABLE     Coe-Pack    The sutures will dissolve in     7-10 Days     2-3 Weeks  
 NON-RESORBABLE    Return for suture removal in     7-10 Days     2 weeks     3 weeks

## UNCOMMON PROBLEMS

A dry socket is a very unusual complication that can follow extractions, or removal of teeth. You may be suffering from a dry socket if you experience severe pain on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> day following surgery that cannot be relieved by medication. Should this occur, return immediately to our office post-op care. If you are out of town, visit a local dentist.

Pain in the ear, difficulty swallowing, and difficulty in opening and closing the jaws are symptoms which can occur with varying degrees of frequency, and usually are insignificant. If you are experiencing increased swelling 5-7 days after surgery, please contact your doctor.

## FOLLOW-UP

You will likely be advised to schedule a postoperative visit with our office check the progress of recovery. In the meantime, be sure to maintain a healthy diet and follow our guidelines for proper oral hygiene.

Call our office or the doctors directly if after surgery you experience any difficulty in breathing, fever, excessive bleeding or any other unusual conditions. After hours, our answering service can always reach the doctors, but feel free to call them directly should you have any questions or concerns.

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