



## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: ORAL SURGERY**

***PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.*** Sometimes the after effects of Oral Surgery are quite normal, so not all of these instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt, follow these guidelines or call our office at any time for clarification.

### **DAY OF SURGERY**

#### **First Hour:**

Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not being controlled. If active bleeding persists after one hour, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30-60 minutes. The gauze may be changed as necessary and may be dampened or fluffed for more comfortable positioning.

#### **EXERCISE CARE:**

Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do NOT rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects or your fingers. You may brush your teeth gently. DO NOT SMOKE for at least 48 hours, since it is very detrimental to healing.

#### **OOZING:**

Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal. It may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the surgical areas and biting down firmly for 30-60 minutes.

#### **STEADY BLEEDING:**

Bleeding should never be severe. If it is, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between your teeth rather than exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning fresh packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may substitute a tea bag (soaked in hot water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in moist gauze) for 20-30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

#### **SWELLING:**

Often there is some swelling associated with Oral Surgery. You can minimize this by using a cold pack or ice bag, wrap in a towel and apply to your face or cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied for twenty on and then twenty minutes off during the first 12 to 24 hours after surgery. If you have been prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed. After 24 hours, it is usually best to switch from ice to heat to the same areas.

#### **PAIN:**

Unfortunately, most Oral Surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication, and if you take the first pill before the anesthetic

will wear off, you will be able to manage any discomfort better. Effects of pain medicines vary widely among individuals. If you do not achieve adequate relief, you may supplement each pill with an analgesic such as Aspirin or Acetaminophen. Some people may even require two of the pain pills at one time during early stages (but that may add to the risk of upset stomach). Remember that the most severe discomfort is usually within the first six hours after the anesthetic wears off; after that your need for medicine should lessen.

### **NAUSEA:**

Nausea is not an uncommon event after surgery, and it is sometimes caused by stronger pain medicines. Nausea may be reduced by preceding each pill, with a small amount of food and then taking the pill with a large volume of water. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize the pain medication, but call us if you do not feel better or if repeated vomiting is a problem. Cola drinks that have less carbonation may help with nausea.

### **DIET:**

Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. The temperature of the food doesn't matter, but avoid *extremely hot* foods. It is sometimes advisable, but not required, to confine the first day's intake to bland liquids or pureed foods (creamed soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.) Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc. that may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you can progress to solid foods at your own pace. It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are a Diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits as much as possible and follow instructions from us or your physician regarding your insulin schedule.

### **SHARP EDGES:**

If you feel sharp edges in the surgical areas with your tongue, it is probably the bony walls which originally supported the teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the first week or two after surgery. They are not pieces of tooth and, if necessary, we will remove them. Please call the office if you are concerned.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS**

### **MOUTH RINSES:**

Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use one quarter teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 oz. Glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily for the next five days.

### **BRUSHING:**

Begin your normal Oral Hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing of all areas, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

### **HOT APPLICATIONS:**

Apply warm compresses to the skin overlying areas of swelling (hot water bottles, moist hot towels, and heating pad) for 20 minutes on and then 20 minutes off to help soothe those tender areas. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.

### **SYRINGE:**

If you were given an irrigating syringe at your first office check-up visit, start using it the *third day* after surgery to keep the sockets clean. Fill it with warm water and irrigate any open sockets gently, especially after eating.

### **DRY SOCKETS:**

Normal Healing after a tooth extraction should be as follows:

- The *first* day of Surgery is usually the most uncomfortable and there is some degree of swelling and stiffness.
- The *second* day you will usually be far more comfortable and, although still swollen, you can usually begin a substantial diet.
- From the *third* day on, GRADUAL, STEADY IMPROVEMENT should mark the remainder of your Post-Operative Care.

If a DRY SOCKET occurs (loss of blood clot from socket, usually on the third to fifth day), there is a noticeable distinct, persistent throbbing pain in the jaw, often radiating toward the ear and forward along the jaw to cause teeth to ache and do not see any steady improvement during the first few days after surgery, don't suffer needlessly. Please call the office and report your symptoms so you can be seen as soon as possible.

**\*\*\* It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have any questions about your progress, please call the office where you had your surgery. Please try to call during office hours; however a 24-hour answering service is available for after hour contact with a doctor. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response. \*\*\***