

## SURGICAL POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

These are general instructions for all surgical procedures, and not all of these instructions may apply to your recovery. Follow these instructions as guidelines for your recovery, and when in doubt call our office for further instructions or clarification.

### **Immediately After Surgery:**

Maintain firm pressure on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical site(s). Make sure they remain in place and undisturbed for 30-45 minutes, and then reapply clean gauze if still bleeding. You can also use a moist black tea bag in place of the gauze. **DO NOT** eat, drink, or sleep with gauze in your mouth.

If you experience continued heavy bleeding while biting on the gauze, it means the gauze is likely in the wrong position, and not applying direct pressure to the surgical site(s). Repeat these steps:

1. Remove gauze.
2. Reposition gauze or tea bag to apply direct pressure to bleeding site(s).
3. Bite on gauze or tea bag for 30-45 minutes.

Intermittent bleeding or oozing can last for 24 hours, and in some cases even longer if you are taking blood thinners. The blood will mix with saliva and appear like there is more blood than actually present. It is important to determine if there is active bleeding or not.

### **Pain:**

Most oral surgery procedures are accompanied by some degree of discomfort, but fortunately there are several good strategies to help you through the healing process. Some form of pain reliever should be taken prior to the numbness wearing off. Over-the-counter medications like Ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®), acetaminophen (Tylenol®), or naproxen sodium (Aleve®) are adequate if there are no allergies, they have been tolerated well in the past, and there are no interactions with any other medications you take. If a narcotic is prescribed for a more extensive procedure, it may be alternated or taken in addition to Ibuprofen if there are no allergies and has been tolerated well in the past. Taking your medications with food decreases the chance of nausea. Remember, narcotic pain medication will impair your judgement and motor functions, so driving or operating heavy machinery is to be avoided.

### **Antibiotics:**

Antibiotics are prescribed to treat or prevent infections, so you must finish all antibiotic medication as directed. If you experience adverse reactions such as nausea, rash, or itching, discontinue the medication. A rash or itching may indicate an allergic reaction to the medication. Antihistamines (Benadryl®) can usually counteract hives, rash, or itching. Swelling of the lips or tongue, or difficulty breathing may represent a more severe allergic reaction, and you should seek medical attention immediately.

### **Swelling:**

Swelling following an oral surgery procedure is normal, and should reach its peak within 48 hours. Keep your head elevated when lying down in order to minimize facial swelling. Also utilize a cold compress every hour

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(on 15 minutes, off 15 minutes) for the first 48 hours can minimize swelling. After 48 hours, warm compresses will help minimize swelling. This should be continued until swelling has subsided.

### **Rinsing:**

**DO NOT** rinse for the first 24 hours following your surgical procedure, as it may disturb the clot. After 24 hours, you may begin gently rinsing with warm salt water. Add 2 teaspoons of salt to 8 ounces of warm water, and rinse gently 3 or 4 times per day for 1 week.

### **Disruption of the Blood Clot:**

**DO NOT** spit, swish vigorously, use a straw, smoke, or drink alcohol, as these actions can disrupt the blood clot, promote bleeding, cause dry socket, or delay/inhibit healing.

### **Brushing:**

Avoid brushing the surgical site(s) the day of surgery since there may be sutures that can be disturbed, as well as some soreness and swelling. Begin your normal hygiene routine as soon as possible, and gently brush the areas that you are comfortable with.

### **Diet:**

A nutritionally balanced diet is very important. During the first 24 hours, eat cool or room temperature soups and soft foods that are easily chewed and swallowed. You may gradually progress to solid foods over the next few days. Do not skip meals. Nutritious meals will aid in feeling better, gaining strength, less discomfort, and faster healing. Take any prescribed food supplements as directed. A soft diet includes the following:

- Colas, Ginger Ale, Milkshakes, Protein/Ensure shakes, Milk
- Cottage Cheese, Baby Food, Yogurt (no fruit pieces), Jell-O® (no fruit pieces), Applesauce, Pudding
- Mashed Potatoes, Soup (lukewarm), Macaroni and Cheese
- Ice Cream, Sherbert, Frozen Yogurt, Smoothies (no seeds or fruit/vegetable pieces)

Avoid any foods that contain nuts, seeds, popcorn, rice, corn, or chips.

All food and drink should be consumed chilled/cool until numbness subsides.

### **Dry Socket:**

When a dry socket occurs, there is constant pain that radiates to other areas of the jaw, teeth, and ear. Symptoms of dry socket do not occur until the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> day post-operatively, and is a result of losing the blood clot in the socket. All of the surrounding area will appear normal. If you do not have improvement after the first few days following the procedure, please contact the office. A medicated dressing may need to be placed to alleviate symptoms.

### **Bruising:**

Bruising may occur 24-48 hours after surgery, especially in patients taking blood thinners. Application of warm compresses to the area (15 minutes on, 15 minutes off) can expedite the resolution of bruising.



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### **Smoking and Alcohol:**

Avoid smoking or chewing tobacco for 1 week following any surgical procedure(s). Alcohol should not be consumed while taking pain medication and/or antibiotics.

### **Sharp Bony Edges:**

If you feel anything hard with your tongue around the surgical site, it is likely the bony wall that supported the tooth that was removed. Leave this area alone, and it will heal on its own.

If any difficulty arises following your procedure, please call us to follow up on your treatment.