
Board Certified Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

*****PLEASE READ BOTH SIDES OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY*****

Sometimes the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt, follow these guidelines or call our office for clarification. Our number is: **410-581-9008**

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. The packs may be gently removed after 20-30 minutes. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30 to 45 minutes).

EXERCISE CARE: Do not disturb the surgical area today. Avoid forceful blowing of the nose, sneezing, and spitting out. Do **NOT** rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. Do not brush your teeth today. **PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours, since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause a dry socket.

OOZING: Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. Bleeding may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the areas and biting on the gauze for 30 minutes at a time.

PERSISTENT BLEEDING: Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may substitute a **BLACK** tea bag (soaked in warm water, squeezed damp-dry and placed over the surgical site) for 20 to 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office. You should use “black tea” – herbal tea is not effective.

SWELLING: Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery. **The peak of the swelling will occur on the 2nd to 3rd postoperative day.**

PAIN: Unfortunately most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. If you take analgesics before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage the discomfort better. Some patients find that stronger pain medicine causes nausea, but if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food and keep activity level to a minimum, chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals. Some patients may even require two of the pain pills at one time. Remember that the most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic wears off; after that your need for medicine should lessen. **If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office.**

NAUSEA: Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometimes pain medications are the cause. Nausea can be reduced by preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better.

DIET: Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to confine the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods, (soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, smoothies, etc.) It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster.

SHARP EDGES: If you feel something hard or sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls which once supported the extracted teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS

MOUTH RINSES: Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use ¼ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce 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.

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

HOT APPLICATIONS: You may apply warm compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (hot water bottle, hot moist towels, heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.

EAR PAIN: Jaw pain, earache and bad taste in the mouth may develop from 2-12 days after extractions. This may be due to loss of the blood clot leaving the raw bony walls of the socket exposed to the saliva (dry socket). Call and return to the office for a simple treatment (insertion of a medicated dressing)

ANTIBIOTICS: If you were prescribed antibiotics and are taking birth control pills, you must use an alternative method of birth control to avoid pregnancy. Antibiotics may block the protective action of the birth control pill. Once you are no longer taking the antibiotic, continue the use of alternative birth control method until your next menstrual cycle.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call our office, **(410-581-9008)**. A 24-hour answering service is available to contact the doctor on call after hours. Call the office and follow the phone prompts to get the answering service. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern.