

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

You have just had oral surgery. This may or may not have included an incision along your gums. This results in a group of symptoms which you must be aware of.

### SWELLING

This is a normal reaction. Swelling can be on the cheek, face, or neck. Swelling is usually greatest about 3 days after surgery and may take a few days to subside.

### JAW STIFFNESS

This is also a normal reaction. You may not be able to open your mouth normally for about 3 days post-operatively, but the stiffness may last for up to about 3 weeks. This inability to open mouth is in no way related to the stitches.

### PAIN

Specific medication instructions will be provided during discharge teaching.

Prescribed pain medications should be alternated in specified intervals for best results. PLEASE TAKE THE MEDICATION AS PRESCRIBED. The medication will not completely alleviate all pain under all circumstances. Be careful what you do to the surgical site. If it hurts, stop doing it. Some pain may persist over a week from surgery. Post-operative pain is usually greatest the second day after surgery and starts reducing with time. If the level of pain increases sharply 5 days after surgery, contact us because there may be a possibility of a dry socket.

### BRUISING

Can occur locally or at a distance from the surgical site. Sometimes bruising may appear on the cheek, neck, or even chest. Bruising may take up to 2 weeks to subside.

### NUMBNESS

Numbness along your tongue, teeth, lip, or chin is a possible sequelae of any oral surgery, which may take weeks or even months to resolve.

### STITCHES

Most of the stitches we use dissolve on their own in 2 to 12 days (depending on one's salivary content). They are there to keep parts of the tissue together for initial healing only. If they come out within 24-48 hours, do not panic: they have likely already done their intended job and healing will not be affected adversely.

### WHAT SHOULD I NOT DO

- Do not rinse your mouth vigorously on the day of surgery unless specifically instructed to do so. Rinsing may wash out the blood clot and can result in a very painful situation called a dry socket.
- Do not stick your fingers into your mouth or try to poke at the site of surgery. No matter how much you wash your hands, the germs that are on your hands are different than the ones that live in your mouth. You may introduce a very nasty infection.
- Do not pull at your cheek to "look at the socket." Looking in no way helps your healing.
- Do not drink through a straw, especially thick liquids like milkshakes. The suction needed to draw the liquid can cause bleeding to start.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Relax!
- Have extra few pillows if you lie down so that your head and upper body are raised. This reduces the pooling of fluids into your face and reduces swelling.
- Use an ice pack. 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off repeatedly. Do this on the day of surgery and for 2 days after. This will reduce swelling and pain.
- If there is bleeding, remember that a few drops of blood into a mouth full of saliva will give you a mouth full of red as it mixes with saliva. Minor bleeding may persist 3 or 4 days following surgery.
- If there is excessive bleeding, place a folded gauze that was supplied to you and keep a steady pressure for about an hour (watch the clock). Sit down, and do not exert yourself.
- If bleeding does not stop, take a dry tea bag and put 2 or 3 drops of water on it so that it is not totally dry. Place this tea bag onto the bleeding site and apply steady pressure for about an hour. If this does not stop the bleeding, contact the office.

### WHAT CAN I EAT?

Wait until the freezing goes away. If you try to eat with parts of your mouth frozen, you may bite yourself and do serious damage to your lips, cheeks, and/or tongue.

Respect your body's healing efforts. Stay on soft to liquid foods like scrambled eggs, shakes, mashed potatoes, well-cooked pasta, etc. Do not eat foods that require vigorous chewing. Stay away from granular foods, like pieces of nuts, rice, etc., that could get lodged in extraction sockets.

If you were prescribed medications, take them exactly as instructed on the bottle. Taking more than prescribed may be dangerous to your health. Note: APEX Surgical Centre for Oral + Facial Surgery will not prescribe you narcotics on the weekend.

If there are any questions, call us during regular business hours. If you have an after-hours emergency, call us at (250) 371-7076 and follow the prompts to leave an emergency voice mail. It will be triaged appropriately. Someone is always on call for you.