

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Care of the mouth after surgery has an important effect on healing. Swelling, discomfort, slight oozing of blood, and restricted jaw movement may be expected. These problems need not cause alarm and may be minimized if the following post-operative instructions are followed carefully.

### Bleeding

(IT IS NOT UNUSUAL TO HAVE SLIGHT OOZING FOR 24 HOURS AND BREAKTHROUGH BLEEDING FOR 10 DAYS AFTER AN ORAL SURGICAL PROCEDURE.)

A folded gauze sponge has been placed in the area of surgery prior to leaving the office. Bite on it with constant, firm pressure. When it is completely red, remove the gauze. If there is continued active bleeding, place new gauze over the area, and change it every 20 minutes for an hour and a half. Remember, a drop of blood mixed with saliva may seem like a mouth full of blood. A moist tea bag may be substituted for the gauze if the gauze pad does not seem to be working. Do not sleep with the gauze in your mouth, as you may choke on it. Place a towel on your pillow to prevent staining of linen with blood.

### Swelling

Swelling should be at its greatest 2-4 days after surgery. The swelling should SLOWLY disappear, sometimes lasting 2-3 weeks. To minimize swelling, apply an ice bag to the operated side of the face as soon as you arrive home. Apply cold for 20 minutes, then off for 20 minutes. Continue this for 5-6 hours. Ice is to be used the first day only. A heating pad may be applied to help with circulation on the following days.

### Pain

Discomfort (or severe pain after any difficult or prolonged surgery) should be expected. Medication will be prescribed to make you comfortable. Remember, after a pain medication is swallowed, it may take an hour to take effect and may only work for 3-4 hours. It is, therefore, important to try to keep ahead of anticipated pain. The full dose of pain medication every 3-4 hours will be much more beneficial than smaller amounts taken more frequently. It is not uncommon to have pain a week after surgery. Pain should not be getting worse after 1 week.

### Care of the Mouth

Avoid brushing, rinsing, and spitting the day of the surgery and drinking through a straw for 1 week. These activities may dislodge the blood clot. You should understand that smoking could be very detrimental to the progress of recovery. The morning after surgery, rinse gently with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water). Repeat every few hours, especially after meals, for the next 3-4 days.

### Diet

You may prefer soft or liquid foods for your own comfort. It is important to maintain a good dietary intake immediately after surgery, even if it is only liquids.

### Nausea

Nausea may accompany the discomfort during the initial post-operative period. Remember to eat before taking medications. If nausea continues, then contact the office.



## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS (CONT.)

### Post-Operative Conditions

The following post-operative conditions may occur in some patients while healing is progressively normal:

1. Swelling on one or both sides of the jaw.
2. Numbness (paresthesia) around the corner of the mouth or tongue.
3. Tightness of the muscles, which may cause difficulty in opening the mouth.
4. Slight earache or sore throat.
5. The skin may become discolored a few days after surgery.
6. Tenderness, discoloration, or hardening at the site of injection.

You should be careful standing after lying for a prolonged period of time. Have someone at your side in case you feel faint.

### Denture Patients

Do not remove denture for 24 hours after surgery.

**Note:** In case of problems or questions, contact our office. If you think you may need a refill of your prescriptions, please call during office hours.

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