



UPSTATE

ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY, P.A.

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POST-SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS

Please read and follow these instructions carefully. The after-effects of oral surgery vary with each individual, so not all of these instructions may apply. Please feel free to call our office any time should you have any questions, or if you are experiencing any unusual symptoms following your treatment.

DAY OF SURGERY

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY. Patients who received intravenous sedation during their procedure should return home from the office immediately following discharge, and lie down with the head elevated until all the effects of the anesthetic have disappeared. You should not operate any mechanical equipment or drive a motor vehicle for at least 24 hours following intravenous sedation. Anesthetic effects vary with each individual, and you may feel drowsy for a short period of time or for a number of hours.

ORAL HYGIENE AND CARE. Do not disturb the surgical area today. Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze pack that we have initially placed over the surgical area, making sure that they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not being controlled. This is important to allow a blood clot to form at the surgery site. The gauze may be changed when necessary and/or repositioned for comfort. **DO NOT** rinse or brush your teeth vigorously or probe the area with the tongue, your fingers, or any objects. You may brush your teeth gently, carefully avoiding surgical sites. **DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours, since it is very detrimental to the healing process.

BLEEDING. Some bleeding is normal and blood tinged saliva may be present for 24 hours. This may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the surgical areas and biting down firmly for 60 minute intervals. If bleeding persists, this may be due to the gauze pads being clinched between the teeth rather than exerting pressure on the surgery site. Try repositioning the gauze. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy, substitute a moist tea bag (first soaked in hot water, squeezed dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) on the area for 20 to 30 minutes. If bleeding continues, please call our office.

SWELLING OR BRUISING. Swelling is to be expected, and usually reaches its maximum in 48 hours. To minimize swelling, cold packs or an ice bag wrapped in a towel should be applied to the face adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 20 minutes on, then removed for 20 minutes for the first 12 to 24 hours after surgery. After 48 hours, it is usually best to switch from using the cold pack to applying a heating pad or hot water bottle to the same area, until swelling has receded. Bruising may also occur, but should disappear over several days. Tightness of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening the mouth. This should disappear within 7 days. Keep lips moist with cream or Vaseline to prevent cracking or chapping.

DIET. Eat any nourishing food that can be taken in comfort. It is advisable to confine the first days food intake to bland liquids or pureed or soft foods. Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds or popcorn, which may get lodged in the surgery areas. Over the next several days, you may progress to more solid foods. Proper nourishment aids in the healing process, therefore a multivitamin taken daily following surgery will insure that you receive necessary nutrients. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal diet as much as possible and follow your physician's instructions regarding your insulin schedule.

PAIN AND MEDICATIONS. Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. Take the pain medication prescribed as directed. The local anesthetic administered for your surgery normally has a 6-8 hour duration, and it may

be difficult to control the pain once the anesthetic wears off. We therefore, advise you to have some food no longer than 3 to 4 hours after your surgery, and then take your first dose of pain medication 1 hour following your meal. Taking the pain medication after food and with a large volume of water will lessen any side effects of nausea or stomach upset. If you do not achieve adequate pain relief, you may supplement each pill with an analgesic such as aspirin or ibuprofen.

If you are prescribed an antibiotic and are currently taking oral contraceptives, you should use an alternate method of birth control for the remainder of this cycle.

ORTHODONTIC APPLIANCES. If you wear orthodontic appliances, replace them immediately after surgery unless otherwise instructed. If these appliances are left out of the mouth for any length of time, it is often difficult or impossible to reinsert them.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING DAYS

ORAL HYGIENE. Keeping your mouth clean after oral surgery is essential. Begin your normal tooth brushing routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may prevent rigorous brushing of all areas, but make every effort to clean your teeth within your comfort level. The morning after surgery start rinsing your mouth with a warm salt water rinse (1/2 tsp. salt with 1 cup warm water) every 2 to 3 hours. Continue this for several days then rinse 3 or 4 times a day for 2 weeks. It is imperative to keep your mouth clean, since an accumulation of food or debris may promote infection.

CARE OF SURGICAL AREA. Apply moist heat (heating pad or hot water bottle) to the skin overlying areas of swelling for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe these tender areas. This will also aid in reducing swelling and stiffness. If you were given an irrigating syringe, start using it the 7th day after surgery to keep the sockets clean. Fill it with warm salt water and irrigate any open sockets gently, especially after eating.

OTHER POSSIBLE POST-SURGICAL EFFECTS

DRY SOCKETS. The blood clot in the surgical site may be lost causing a dry socket (usually on the 3rd to 5th day after surgery). There will be a noticeable, distinct, persistent pain in the jaw area, often radiating towards the ear and forward along the jaw which may cause other teeth to ache. If you do not see steady improvement during the first few days after surgery or if severe pain persists, please call the office to report these symptoms.

SKIN DISCOLORATION. This may be expected and is usually limited to the neck or cheek area near the surgical site. This is caused by bleeding in the soft tissues of the mouth beneath the skin and appears as a bruise. If discoloration occurs, it often takes 7 - 10 days for this to completely disappear. Occasionally, the arm or hand at the site where the needle was placed to administer IV drugs may bruise or be tender. Aspirin and application of heat to the area will usually correct these symptoms.

NUMBNESS. Loss of sensation of the chin and lip may occur usually following lower wisdom teeth removal. This is usually temporary and disappears within a few days or weeks. Occasionally, some numbness may persist for months due to the close association of the roots of the teeth to the nerve that supplies sensation to these areas described.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. If you have any questions about your progress or any symptoms you are experiencing, please call our office at (864) 585-3318. After office hours, instructions will be given on the answering machine enabling you to contact the doctor.