

Timothy L. Gutierrez, DMD

Ryan T. Sterk, DDS

ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

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: 881-7373

DAY OF SURGERY

FIRST HOUR: Bite down firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Keep the gauze in for about 20 minutes. There is no need to replace the gauze. Blood tinged saliva is normal and oozing is normal but if active bleeding persists, moisten a tea bag with warm water, squeeze out the water and bite down on it for about 15 minutes.

EXERCISE CARE: Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do **NOT** rinse or probe the area with any objects. Do not brush your teeth. **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.

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 tea bag** soaked in warm water, squeeze excess water out and bite down for 20 or 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

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 twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery. While resting keep head elevated with pillows or sitting in a reclining chair.

PAIN: Unfortunately most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. **If you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort better.** Once you arrive home start on Advil or ibuprofen if directed by your doctor. **You will have a prescription for pain medication. Take only as needed.** Some patients find that stronger pain medicine causes nausea. Before taking pain medication coat your stomach with a dairy product, such as milk, pudding, yogurt, or ice cream and chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals. If you do not achieve adequate relief at first, you may supplement each pain pill with an analgesic such as aspirin or ibuprofen. 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. If you anticipate needing more prescription medication for the weekend, you must call for a refill during weekday business hours.**

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, and taking the pill with a large volume of water. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better. Classic Coca Cola may help with nausea.

DIET: Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. 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, 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. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

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 1/4 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.

HEALING: Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: The first two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. **The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement.** If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office. If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, **DO NOT** use it for the first five days. Then use it daily according to the instructions until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket.

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 the office where you had surgery. A 24-hour answering service is available to contact the doctor on call after hours. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern.

PLEASE NOTE: telephone calls for narcotic (pain killer) prescription renewal are ONLY accepted during office hours.