



## Oral Surgery Post-Operative Care

### Information Included

**Wound Care**

**Pain Management**

**Eating and Drinking**

**Medication**

Following your oral surgery procedure, it is important that you take the appropriate care to manage pain and care of the surgical site. These instructions are provided to assist you with that care.

**READ ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY** Sometimes the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all these 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 at 206-624-0852.

### When You Get Home

- It is very important to follow the home care instructions provided to you for proper healing. Do not disturb the surgical area today.
- During the ride home, bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure that they remain in place.
- When you get home, remove the gauze and take your medication, with food.
- Place fresh gauze on the surgical area and continue to firmly bite down.
- If active bleeding persists after one hour, replace the saturated gauze with enough new gauze to create pressure over the surgical site.
- Change the gauze every 30-60 minutes while awake. Be sure to remove the gauze before you eat, drink, or sleep. Do NOT sleep with the gauze in your mouth.
- Continue to change the gauze until the bleeding stops. Bleeding may persist 3-4 hours. It is normal to have blood tinged saliva for up to a week after surgery.
- The gauze may be dampened to prevent sticking to the surgical area.

## **Bleeding**

- Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal for 48-72 hours after surgery. It may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the surgical area(s) and biting down firmly for 30-60 minutes.
- Elevate your head with a couple of pillows.
- Bleeding should never be severe. If it is, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between your teeth rather than applying pressure directly to the surgical areas. Try repositioning fresh gauze packs.
- If heavy bleeding persists or becomes very heavy you may substitute a black tea bag (soaked in hot water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) for 20-30 minutes.
- If bleeding remains uncontrolled, call our office at 206-624-0852.

## **Diet**

- It is important to drink 8-10 glasses of water or other clear liquids each day. You may experience temperature intolerance due to dehydration if you do not drink enough clear fluids. Not drinking fluids and dehydration after surgery is the main cause of post-operative nausea and vomiting – please drink your fluids!
- Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort.
- Avoid extremely hot, spicy and acidic foods, and carbonated beverages.
- It is sometimes advisable, but not required, to confine the first day's intake to bland liquids or pureed foods (cream soups, puddings, yogurt, milkshakes, eggs, pasta, etc.). Consume this at a cold to slightly-warm temperature.
- Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, gum, fried foods, etc. for 7-14 days or until sockets or incisions close.
- Over the next several days you may progress to solid foods at your own pace.
- **DO NOT USE STRAWS FOR 14 DAYS.**
- It is important that you do not skip meals!
- Decreased appetite following surgery is not uncommon, but continue to take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster.
- If you have diabetes, maintain your normal diet as much as possible and follow any special instructions given by Dr. Cheung or your physician regarding your insulin schedule.

## **Activity**

- No strenuous exercising for a minimum of 5 days following your procedure.
- No playing woodwind instruments for 14 days following your procedure.

## **Swelling**

- Often there is swelling associated with oral surgery.
- Minimize swelling by applying ice packs for the first 24-48 hours after surgery while awake. Apply the ice pack to the face (wrapped with a towel as needed) or cheek adjacent to the surgical area for 20 minutes, alternating ice 20 minutes on the site and 20 minutes off the site throughout the day.
- The swelling peaks on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> day after your surgery and starts to decrease after that, so do not be alarmed if you see an increase in swelling all the way to the 4<sup>th</sup> post-operative day.
- If you smoke either cigarettes or marijuana, please do NOT smoke for at least 7 days to allow the blood clot in your sockets to mature. Smoking greatly increases the risk of dry socket and post-operative pain.
- Try to avoid flying for 5-7 days

### **Nausea**

- Nausea is not an uncommon event after surgery and is sometimes caused by stronger pain medicines.
- Precede each pill with a dairy product or a small amount of soft food to reduce nausea.
- Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize the pain medication. However, call us if you do not feel better or if repeated vomiting is a problem.

### **Dizziness**

- You may experience dizziness following your oral surgery. Be sure to request assistance while moving about after surgery to prevent injury.
- Do NOT drive if you are experiencing dizziness.

### **Pain**

- Most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication, and an anti-inflammatory.
- When you get home take the first pill before the numbness has worn off; you will be able to manage any discomfort better.

### **Anti-Inflammatory Medications**

- Ibuprofen - 600 mg tablets 1 tablet every 6 hours as needed for pain when you get home after eating and drinking.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Narcotics (Pain Medications)**

- Norco - (Hydrocodone with Tylenol) 1-2 tablets every 6 hours as needed for pain. If taking these, do not take Tylenol (acetaminophen) at the same time.
- Percocet – (Oxycodone with Tylenol) 1-2 tablets every 6 hours as needed for pain. If taking these, do not take Tylenol (acetaminophen) at the same time.

- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Antibiotics**

- Amoxicillin 500 mg capsules – Take 2 tabs 2 hours prior to surgery with a small sip of water, unless otherwise indicated. After surgery, take 1 capsule every 8 hours until gone.
- Azithromycin (Z-Pack) – Take as directed on packaging
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## **What to expect each day after surgery**

### **Day Zero**

- This is the day of surgery. Follow instructions regarding gauze application, diet, medications and applying ice to the surgery area(s).
- Discomfort may be the most intense for the first 6-24 hours; this is common after oral surgery. Pain should begin to subside after 24 hrs.
- The surgical area(s) will begin to form a blood clot. It is important that you do not disturb the clot.
- **Do not use an electric toothbrush or water pick near the area of your surgical site for at least 7 days to allow proper clot formation**

### **Day One**

- Begin your normal oral hygiene routine (tooth brushing, etc.) 24 hours after surgery.
- **Do not use an electric toothbrush or water pick near the area of your surgical site for at least 7 days to allow proper clot formation**
- Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing of all areas, but please make every effort to clean your teeth comfortably.
- Do NOT rinse vigorously, spit or probe the area with your fingers or any objects.

### **Day Two and Beyond**

- Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential.
- Begin using 1 teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8-ounce glass of warm water to rinse your mouth after meals. You may use prescription peridex as an alternative.
- Gently rinse with small amounts of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. • Avoid vigorous swishing or spitting.
- Repeat as often as you like, but at least 3-4 times daily for the next five days.
- Begin introducing more solid foods into your diet.

### **Day Three and Beyond**

- Moist warm compresses may be applied to the skin overlying areas of swelling, beginning 48 hours after surgery.
- Application of moist-warm compresses combined with deep massage of the muscles will help decrease swelling, ease stiffness, minimize muscle spasm and soothe tender areas.
- You need to be able to open your mouth to three fingers width. Massage will help this; gently open and close your mouth to minimize pain and discomfort.

### **Day Five and Beyond**

- Begin using the syringe filled with warm water on day 7. Use daily after every meal and before bedtime for a minimum of 3 weeks. Continue rinsing until all sites are healed, typically 4-6 weeks. You will receive your syringe on day of surgery.
- If sutures (stitches) were placed, they will dissolve by themselves, typically in 3-7 days unless you are specifically told that non-dissolvable sutures were used.
- Sutures may loosen or come out early – do not panic. Your wound should still heal normally.
- If you feel sharp edges in the surgical areas with your tongue it is probably the bony walls that originally supported the teeth.
- Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during or after healing. Call our office if this occurs.
- Normal healing after tooth extraction is as follows:
  - The 2nd-3rd day of surgery is usually the most uncomfortable and there is some degree of swelling and stiffness.
  - The 4th day on should mark the remainder of your post-operative course.
  - The 4th and 5th day you will usually be far more comfortable and, although still swollen, you can usually begin a more substantial diet.
- If a DRY SOCKET occurs (loss of blood clot from socket, usually on the 3rd-5th day), there is a noticeable, distinct, persistent throbbing pain in the jaw, often radiating toward the ear and forward along the jaw to cause other teeth to ache. There is also generally a foul taste in the mouth. Call our office if you feel like this is occurring.
- If you do not see steady improvement during the next few days, don't suffer needlessly. Call the office and report your symptoms so you can be seen as soon as possible.

### **CALL OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS**

- Excessive swelling
- Persistent pain that increases despite pain medication
- Increased muscle stiffness beyond 5 days
- Increased redness after 5-7 days

- Difficulty swallowing
- Increased difficulty in opening your mouth after 5-7 days
- Fever and chills

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. To this end, these instructions are provided to assist you. If you have any questions about your progress, call our office at 206-624-0852. Please try to reach our office during business hours, as this will result in a faster response.