

# Post – Operative Instructions for Oral Surgery

## Please Read Carefully

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 depending on the extent and location of the surgery. These problems need not cause alarm and may be minimized if the following post-operative instructions are followed.

**Bleeding** – it is not unusual to have slight oozing for 24 hours and periodic bleeding for 10 days after an oral surgical procedure. A folded gauze sponge has been placed in the area of surgery prior to you leaving the office. Bite on it with constant, firm pressure. After one hour, remove the gauze. If there is continued bleeding, place a new gauze or moistened tea bag over the area and bite down for 30 minutes. Avoid spitting or rinsing your mouth on the day of the surgery.

Remember a drop or two of blood mixed with saliva may seem like a mouth full of blood. Firm biting pressure and correctly placed gauze on the surgical area is the most effective means of stopping the bleeding.

**Swelling** – swelling will be at its greatest 2 days after surgery, and then the swelling will slowly disappear. To minimize swelling after prolonged surgery, apply ice bag to the operated side of the face as soon as you arrive home. Apply cold for 20 minutes, off for 10 minutes, and then continue for 2-3 hours.

**Pain** – Discomfort (or severe pain after any difficult or prolonged surgery) should be expected. Medication will be prescribed to make you comfortable. Severe pain lasting more than 3 days is not normal. Come in or call if this happens. 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.

**Care of the mouth** – Do not rinse your mouth for 24 hours after surgery. This may dislodge the blood clot and interrupt the normal course of healing. Be sure not to smoke or drink through a straw, as it may cause dry socket, which may be painful.

**Diet** – Eat whatever you wish. You may prefer soft or liquid foods for you own comfort. Avoid foods that require hard chewing or have small particles (seeds, nuts, rice, and popcorn). It is very important to maintain a good dietary intake even if it is only liquids.

**Nausea** – Nausea may accompany the discomfort during initial post-operative period. Small sips of tea, 7-up, or ginger ale may help.

The following post-operative conditions may occur in some patients while healing is progressing normally.

- Swelling and bruising on one or both sides of the jaw.
- Numbness (paresthesia) around the corner of the mouth or tongue.
- Tightness of the muscles (truisms) may cause difficulty in opening the mouth.
- Slight earache or sore throat.

**Please keep in mind** that it is reasonable to expect your normal activities to be disrupted following surgical procedure.

**Denture patients** – Please do not remove denture for 24 hours after surgery.