

## ROUTINE POST-SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. MEDICATIONS/PRESCRIPTIONS:** If an antibiotic was prescribed, it is to be taken until finished. Pain medication is to be taken as instructed on the bottle. No driving, working, school, or drinking alcohol while taking narcotic pain medication. The local anesthetic will wear off within one-half hour- 4 hours following surgery. It is important to take your pain medication prior to discomfort. It is also important to eat prior to taking pain medication. Not eating can cause nausea and vomiting. After the first 24-72 hours, you may switch to using over-the-counter pain medications. If you should develop a rash, itching, difficulty breathing, wheezing, nasal congestion, or swelling around the eyes not related to the surgery, stop taking all medications and notify our office immediately. **ATTENTION:** All female patients using birth control pills, please be advised that if the doctor prescribes the use of antibiotics, an alternative form of birth control must be used during that period of time.
- 2. BLEEDING:** Gauze was placed over the surgical site to serve as a pressure bandage when you bite down. Usually, we recommend leaving it in place until the numbness from the local anesthetic wears off, and brisk oozing does not occur when the gauze is removed. To replace gauze, lightly moisten new gauze and apply to area hourly, if needed. Remove the gauze when eating or taking medications. Discontinue the gauze when bleeding has slowed sufficiently or stopped. A small amount of oozing is normal. Pink or blood tinged saliva may be present for 24-48 hours. You may wish to cover your pillow with a towel to avoid staining. Rest with head elevated on two or more pillows for the first day. Excessive bleeding can be controlled by placing a moistened tea bag over the surgical site for one hour while applying pressure.
- 3. EATING:** NO straws for 7 days. Eat cold soft foods for the first 24 hours. Suggestions: ice cream, Jell-O, pudding, yogurt, cottage cheese, milk shakes, applesauce, etc. For the next 4 days, follow a soft diet (eggs, mashed potatoes, pasta). Drink more fluids than you normally would. No alcoholic or carbonated beverages for 4 days after surgery. This is not the time to lose weight: proper nutrition is necessary for healing.
- 4. SWELLING:** Some swelling after surgery is normal; don't be alarmed. It takes 3 days for surgical swelling to reach a peak before subsiding. Ice packs should be applied during the first 24 hours after surgery and can be used to reduce swelling and to help numb local areas after surgery. Plastic bags filled with crushed ice and wrapped in a damp towel or commercial ice bag are convenient forms of application. Apply for 20min, leave off for 10min. After discontinuing ice, switch to moist heat (hot water bottle or warm wash cloth). If there is swelling from infection at the time of surgery, your doctor will advise you: cold or warm applications. Keep head elevated using a semi seated position for the next 3-4 days. Remember to prop head at night with pillows.
- 5. RINSING:** Avoid rigorous rinsing, spitting, and mouthwashes containing alcohol as it may prematurely dissolve the blood clot. After the first 24 hours, begin gently rinsing with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon of salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water) after meals and at bedtime. After 72 hours a more vigorous rinsing is encouraged after meals and at bedtime for 2 weeks.
- 6. BRUISING:** Bruising may be present to varying degrees. It will subside over a period of <10 days.
- 7. SMOKING:** Smoking can increase pain and lead to poor healing. The longer you refrain from smoking, the less chance you have of postoperative problems, such as a dry socket. Dry sockets are a possibility up to 5 days post-op; we strongly encourage you to not smoke at all during this time.
- 8. ACTIVITY:** Avoid excess physical exertion and fatigue during the immediate postoperative period of 5-7 days. If heavy lifting is part of your daily work, please let us know and we can give you a note for light duty. Obtain adequate sleep. Use caution when bending over.
- 9. TOOTH BRUSHING:** NO BRUSHING THE DAY OF SURGERY. Brushing and flossing can be resumed the day after surgery, but avoid the extraction/surgical site for one week. The remainder of the mouth may be brushed normally. When you resume brushing at the surgical site you may experience a small amount of bleeding or discomfort but this is normal.
- 10. SUTURES/DRESSINGS:** A variety of sutures and dressings may have been used as a part of your treatment and you may feel them with your tongue. The sutures will either dissolve on their own or be removed at the appropriate postoperative appointment.

## IMMEDIATE DENTURE INSTRUCTIONS

The denture that was placed in your mouth immediately after surgery will serve as a surgical bandage. Leave the denture in place for 24 hours. If the denture is removed too early, the oral tissues may continue to swell, and you will not be able to replace the denture. After 24 hours, remove as needed to clean or rinse your mouth. After the initial 24-hour period, it is important to keep the denture out at night to allow for adequate healing.

## POSSIBLE CONDITIONS AFTER SURGERY

One or more of the following conditions may develop after your surgery. If so, please refer to this sheet. Call our office if you have any additional questions.

1. **ANTIBIOTICS:** May cause diarrhea or stomach upset. Eating active culture yogurt may help decrease the incidence by restoring normal gastrointestinal flora.
2. **FEVER:** The normal, average oral temperature is 98.6 Fahrenheit. Your temperature may rise slightly for a day or two after surgery and is usually of no concern. If you feel warm or sweaty, we recommend you take and record your oral temperature during the morning and before retiring. A persistently raised temperature should be reported to our office. Drink plenty of fluids during this period.
3. **DRY SOCKET:** This may occur 3-5 days after surgery, usually with lower third molars (wisdom teeth). It is usually characterized by an "ear ache-like" throbbing pain and a foul taste and odor as the result of loss of the blood clot in the tooth socket. Treatment is simple, involving irrigation and dressing placement to alleviate the discomfort.
4. **MUSCLE STIFFNESS:** Tenderness and stiffness within the chewing muscles may develop during the postoperative period and should not alarm you. It is usually due to swelling in the area of the muscles and is best treated with heat therapy. It will slowly resolve over a 5-10-day period.
5. **NAUSEA/VOMITING:** Nausea following surgery is usually due to taking medications on an empty stomach. Keep eating and take as few pain pills as possible. Sipping flat 7-Up, ginger ale, or cola may help. Call our office if severe nausea or vomiting persists.
6. **NUMBNESS:** As explained prior to surgery, a partial numbness of your lips or tongue may be apparent when the local anesthetic wears off. Time will usually resolve this condition. It could be several weeks to several months before feeling returns. It returns slowly and it is hard to perceive the change. Sensations of "burning, tingling, or electric shocks" in the numb areas indicate that feeling is returning. Call any numbness to our attention at your first postoperative visit.
7. **SHARP BONY EDGES:** Small pieces of bone may work out of the surgical area as long as 5-6 weeks after surgery. This may resolve on its own over a period of a few weeks. If necessary, removal of bone spicules is a simple and routine process.
8. **SORE LIPS/CHEEKS:** The corners of your mouth may be dry and cracked after surgery. This is best treated by gently applying Vaseline.

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