

CARE OF YOUR MOUTH AFTER SURGERY

Sometimes the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions may apply. **Please take all medications, and follow all directions as instructed.**

1. **GAUZE:** should be gently removed 1 hour after the procedure has been completed. If there is continued bleeding, immediately replace the gauze.

2. **BLEEDING:** Post-operative bleeding is normal and may last throughout the day and night of surgery. This is usually blood-tinged saliva and decreases as the healing mechanisms take effect.

If bleeding seems to be excessive, first gently rinse all blood out of your mouth with clean water, then, place a tightly fold piece of gauze directly over the surgical site/or extraction socket and bite together with firm pressure for 1 hour. *Make sure the gauze is exerting pressure against the surgical site/or extraction socket and not simply resting between the teeth.* Repeat as necessary. **Call the office or pager if excessive bleeding cannot be controlled with the above methods.**

3. **PAIN:** Begin taking pain medication before the local anesthetic has worn off. If a prescription was not needed, use Tylenol or Advil for mild discomfort. Some stronger pain medications may cause nausea, if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food and water, chances for nausea will be reduced.

4. **NAUSEA:** swallowed blood or pain medication may cause nausea. Try to keep taking fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications. **If nausea or vomiting becomes uncontrolled call the office or pager.**

5. **SWELLING:** To minimize swelling, apply ice packs to the face near the surgical site for 20 minutes at a time, every hour while awake. *Use ice packs only for the first 24 hours after surgery.* After the first 24 hours a heating pad to the surgical area may hasten a reduction in swelling. Expect discomfort and swelling to increase for the first 3 days after surgery. This is part of the normal healing process. **If swelling is excessive, or increasing after the 3rd post-operative day, call the office or pager.**

6. **ORAL HYGIENE:** You should brush your teeth and maintain good oral hygiene after surgery. Use special care when brushing not to disrupt the surgical site(s). Avoid vigorous spitting, rinse your mouth with clean water and allow it to simply fall out of your mouth, without vigorously spitting it out, as this may dislodge the newly formed blood clot.

Avoid vigorous rinsing for the first 24 hours after surgery. The day after surgery, begin to *gently* rinse your mouth with the prescription mouthwash 0.12% Chlorhexidine (if one was prescribed), or warm salt water (1/4 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water) 3 times per day for 1 week.

7. **DIET:** Eat *soft*, nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid chewing over the surgical site until the tenderness goes away, if possible chew on the other side of the mouth. Avoid foods like nuts, popcorn, seeds etc. which may get lodged in the

surgical site(s). During the first 3 post-operative days, do not eat anything HOT, warm and cold are fine. Do not use a straw as this may dislodge the newly formed blood clot.

For Diabetics: Maintain your normal eating habits, and check your blood sugar regularly, (if you normally do so at home).

8. **SMOKING/TOBACCO:** Do not smoke for at least 48 hours as this may impair wound healing... if you are unable to refrain from smoking, take small, light drags to minimize disturbance of the newly formed blood clot.

Avoid using smokeless tobacco as this may impair wound healing... if unable to refrain from smokeless tobacco, do not use near the surgical site(s).

9. **EXERCISE:** It is best to avoid exercise and strenuous activity for the first 2-3 days post-operatively or until you begin to feel up to it. Exercise or strenuous activity will raise your blood pressure and may bring on bleeding during the first 24-48 hours after surgery.

10. **STITCHES:** Most of the time, resorbable stitches are placed that do not require removal. They usually begin to resorb after 1 or more weeks (depending on the type placed). If nonresorbable stitches are placed, they will be removed at your follow-up appointment.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you.

If you have any questions, please call the office.

For emergencies call the office at 561-826-2002 and page your doctor. We are available for you 24 hours for emergencies.