

Post- Operative Instructions after Periodontal Surgery

Please note: These instructions are for the benefit of the dental patients treated by our office. Patients being treated by other dentists may receive the same instructions or instructions that have been modified based upon the individual care they have received. **Should you be experiencing either unusual pain or swelling or both please call your dentist immediately!**

1. Bleeding is to be expected following surgical procedures. The gauze that has been placed in your mouth before you left the office should remain in position for at least 45 minutes. At the end of the 45 minutes, please take two or three pieces of gauze, fold in half and if needed fold again and replace the gauze that is in your mouth and continue biting very firm on the gauze for another 45 minutes - total time biting on gauze is approximately 1 ½ hours. Should the bleeding continue after this, repeat the process, placing gauze for another 45 minutes. Should there continue to be excessive bleeding do as follows: Wipe off excessively large blood clots with gauze. Place folded gauze over the bleeding area. Bite firmly on pad and maintain gentle pressure for 45 minutes. Some oozing of blood over the next few days is normal. Contact the office or go to the emergency room at the hospital if excessive bleeding persists.

2. Pain. Some discomfort is normal following surgery. The site of the surgery as well as the jaw joints may be stiff and sore for as little as a few days or for as long as a couple of weeks. Please take two aspirin or Tylenol™ or Advil™ or other over-the-counter analgesic as soon as you arrive at home. Continue to take the analgesic every three to four hours at least for the first 24 to 48 hours to minimize any discomfort. If you have been given a prescription for pain medication, please take as directed (Do not drive, work with machinery, or drink alcoholic beverages for at least 6 hours after taking any prescribed pain medication). Some pain medications may make you nauseous and should be discontinued if this takes place. If you have a reaction to the medication, stop the medication and call the office immediately.

3. Antibiotics. If antibiotics are prescribed to reduce infection and swelling, take as directed. Be sure to take all the tablets prescribed. If any reactions occur, such as a rash or itching, discontinue all medication immediately and call the office. Antibiotics may take a day or two to be effective so continue to use pain medication as required.

4. Rinsing. On the first day following surgery, do not rinse your mouth, do not spit and do not use mouthwash, as any of these will lead to a possible loss of the blood clot that protects the healing extraction site and will then lead to pain. After the first day of surgery, gently rinse with warm salt water (one teaspoon in glass of warm water) for 20-30 seconds before spitting it out, ten (10) times per day over the next 5-7 days. Do not rinse too vigorously until healing has taken place.

5. Brushing/Flossing. Avoid brushing and flossing the area of surgery to avoid disturbing or dislodging the sutures or gum flap for a period of at least 2 weeks; after 2 weeks you can brush gently (no scrubbing). Do not use floss, or toothpicks or anything else to clean in between the teeth for 6 weeks after your surgery date. Brush and floss all other areas of your mouth.

6. Swelling. Following surgery some swelling is expected. It will reach its peak on the second day following surgery and it will begin to resolve on the fourth day. To minimize swelling, apply a covered (with towel) ice bag to your face for 10-minute intervals, removing the bag for 20 minutes in between intervals to avoid frost-bite. Continue ice packs for 4-6 hours after surgery.

7. Temperature. Following surgery it is quite common to have a slight elevation in temperature. Rest, take 2 aspirin or Tylenol™ or other over-the-counter analgesic every 4-6 hours, and drink plenty of fluids will return temperature to normal. If you are taking prescribed pain medication, they will also aid in controlling fever and additional aspirin or Tylenol™ or other over-the-counter analgesic will not have to be taken.

8. Eating. A well balanced diet is important for proper healing. A soft, bland diet is suggested for the first few days. Drink plenty of fluids as soon as possible (do not use a straw), especially if you have been given antibiotics. Avoid hot foods, hot liquid and avoid smoking for at least 48 to 60 hours after surgery. (Smoking will delay the healing process and will reduce the chance of a successful outcome) Do not chew on a numb or "frozen" lip as injury can result.

9. The following conditions may occur, all of which are considered normal: Swelling and bruising can be expected. Minimize by using ice packs. Slight to moderate pain can be expected. Do not wait until the pain is severe to take medication. Have the prescription filled and take the first dose at once. Trismus (tightness) of the muscles may cause difficulty in opening the mouth. Should this happen, apply moist heat to the area. A sore throat may also develop. The corners of your mouth may dry and crack. Keep moist with ointment or petroleum jelly.

10. Sensitivity to cold, hot or biting is normal following a gum surgery appointment. Some tooth mobility might be normal following treatment. Once the gums heal, teeth will reach their normal degree of mobility.

11. Sutures and Dressing. Silk or permanent sutures are used most often. Sutures are usually removed 3-4 weeks following surgery. If a dressing is placed avoid chewing on that area. The dressing may chip apart during the week which is normal. If any questions please call our office.

12. Keep all post-surgical appointments, usually one week apart for 3 - 4 weeks, and follow-ups to ensure a successful outcome of your procedure. The majority of the healing normally takes place over an 8-12 week period; remaining tissue changes and healing take place over a period of one year.

13. Treatment of gum infection involves removing calculus and plaque, the sources of infection, and allowing periodontal pockets to heal. Infection may get worse in cases where disease was present prior to treatment. Contact our office if you have any concerns.

14. Regular maintenance is essential to maintain healthy gums once all the calculus has been removed, signs of bleeding gums have been eliminated and pocket depths are measured as normal.

15. Recall maintenance appointments (check-ups) are recommended every 3-6 months depending on your ability to maintain a healthy and clean mouth. More frequent appointments may be recommended for certain situations. These appointments are imperative to the success of the procedure.

If you have any concerns or problems contact our office at 403-234-7400 so the problem can be addressed. If the office is closed go to the emergency room at the hospital. Contact our office as soon as possible.