

Post-operative Guidelines

Important Instructions for Patient Self-Care Following Periodontal Surgery

ACTIVITY: After leaving our dental office today, we suggest you consider relaxing or at least limiting your activity as much as possible for the remainder of the day. Avoid strenuous activity and aerobic exercise for the next 3 days. It is important to notify the office in advance of any travel plans post-surgery.

DISCOMFORT: If pain medications have been prescribed, they should be taken as soon as you arrive home. Efficiency is greatest if you start your medication prior to the termination of numbness. Because you have had surgery, some postsurgical discomfort may be present, even with your prescription. Some pain medications may make you drowsy and can slow down your reflexes. Sudden position changes may make you feel dizzy. Driving, making important decisions, and operating machinery should be avoided while taking your pain medication. Pain medications should not be taken on an empty stomach. Consumption of alcoholic beverages while taking prescription pain medications is to be avoided. After the first 3 days, 2 Tylenol, or 2 Advil taken every 4-6 hours as needed, should keep you comfortable.

INFECTION: If you have been given an antibiotic please continue taking it as directed until all of the tablets have been taken. If you notice that after 3 days pain or swelling are increasing, or that you are experiencing an elevated temperature, please call the doctor.

SWELLING: It is normal for some swelling to occur after surgery, particularly in the lower jaw. To minimize swelling after surgery, apply an ice bag wrapped in a light towel or handkerchief to the outside of your face over the operated area. This should be left on your face for about 10 minutes, then removed for 10 minutes, or alternated from side-to-side, between operated areas, for 3-4 hours after surgery. The use of both ice and the NSAID analgesic as described above will reduce the amount and duration of facial swelling. It is common for swelling and discomfort to peak between 2-4 days after your surgery and should diminish each day thereafter.

BLEEDING: It is common to have slight bleeding for a few hours following periodontal surgery. If bleeding persists, apply a wet tea bag to the surgical site with firm but gentle pressure for 25 minutes continuously. **If excessive bleeding continues, please call our office.** Remember, most of the blood you may see in your mouth is actually a little bit of blood mixed with a lot of saliva - blood is a very strong "dye" and a little bit of blood will color your saliva dramatically.

ORAL HYGIENE: Starting the day after the procedure, rinse twice daily with the prescription mouthwash (chlorhexidene gluconate). Please rinse with 1/2 ounce for 30 seconds twice per day after breakfast and before bedtime. Continue to brush and floss regularly in all areas except those treated surgically. Do not use any other mouthwash, as the high alcohol content may cause pain and tissue damage. With the rare exception of certain restorative filling materials, any stains created by the chlorhexidene gluconate can be removed by tooth polishing. In addition, warm salt water rinses may be used for your comfort. Unless specifically advised, do not use a toothbrush or floss where sutures are present.

EATING AND DRINKING: High protein foods and liquids are desirable for 36 hours following surgery. Semi-solid foods may be eaten as long as this may be done comfortably. Eggs, custard, yogurt, pasta, steamed vegetables, casseroles, cooked cereals are some things that you might consider eating during the first few days following your surgery. Avoid spicy, salty, acidic, very hot, and very cold, food and/or liquids. Also avoid nuts, chips and other crunchy or fibrous foods which may get caught between your teeth, as well as citrus acid, including oranges, grapefruit and orange juice.

USE OF REMOVABLE DENTAL APPLIANCES: **If applicable, you must bring any appliance with you at the time of surgery!** It is best to minimize the use of any dental prosthesis/appliance, either permanent or temporary, which makes contact with the operated area until directed otherwise. Any pressure on the surgical site can be detrimental to healing, cause complications, and permanently limit the results of the surgical procedure.

We want you to have as positive of a healing process as possible. If you experience any problems or have any questions after reading these guidelines, please do not hesitate to call the doctor anytime at (518) 587-7512.