

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Consultants of Wisconsin, S.C.

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. Sometimes the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of these instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt, follow these guidelines or call our office anytime for clarification.

DAY OF SURGERY

FIRST HOUR

Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not being controlled. If active bleeding persists after one hour, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30-60 minutes. The gauze may be changed as necessary and may be dampened for more comfortable positioning.

EXERCISE CARE

Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do NOT rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects or your fingers. You may brush your teeth gently. Do NOT smoke, drink carbonated beverages, use straws, suck on hard candy or cough drops, spit, or blow your nose for at least 72 hours, since it is very detrimental to healing.

OOZING

Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal. It may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the surgical areas and biting down for 30-60 minutes. It is also helpful to keep your head elevated above your heart with a couple of extra pillows for the next 24 hours.

STEADY BLEEDING

Bleeding should never be severe. If it is, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between your teeth rather than exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning fresh packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may **substitute a tea bag** (soaked in hot water, squeezed damp dry and wrapped in moist gauze) for 20 or 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

SWELLING

Often there is some swelling associated with oral surgery. You can minimize this by using a cold pack or ice bag wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the face or cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 48 hours after surgery. The 3rd and 4th day will be the peak day for any swelling and/or discomfort.

PAIN

Unfortunately most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication, and if you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you will be able to manage any discomfort better. Effects of pain medicines vary widely among individuals. **If you do not achieve adequate relief**, you may supplement each pill with an analgesic such as aspirin or acetaminophen. Some people may even require two of the pain pills at one time during early stages (but that may add to the risk of upset stomach). Remember that the most severe discomfort is usually within the first six hours after the anesthetic wears off; after that your need for medicine should lessen.

NAUSEA

Nausea is not an uncommon event after surgery, and it is sometimes caused by stronger pain medicines. Nausea may be reduced by preceding each pill with a small amount of soft food, then taking the pill with a large volume of water. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize the pain medication, but call us if you do not feel better or repeated vomiting is a problem. Cola drinks that have less carbonation may help with nausea.

DIET

Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Temperature of the food doesn't matter, but avoid extremely hot foods. It is sometimes advisable, but not required, to confine the first day's intake to bland liquids or pureed foods (creamed soups, puddings, scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.). Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., that may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you can progress to solid foods at your own pace. It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits as much as possible and follow instructions from us or your physician regarding your insulin schedule.

SHARP EDGES

If you feel sharp edges in the surgical areas with your tongue it is probably the bony walls which originally supported teeth. Occasionally after surgery, small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the first week or two. They are not pieces of tooth and if necessary, we will remove them. Please call the office if you are concerned.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS

MOUTH RINSES

Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use one-quarter teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking 5 min to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily for the next five days.

BRUSHING

Begin your normal hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing of all areas, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

Thank you for the privilege of serving your health care needs. 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 about your progress, please call our office. My assistant or I will be happy to help you. Please try to call during office hours, however a 24-hour paging service is available for after hours contact with the doctor.

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