

# **Oral Surgery Post-Surgical Care Sheet**

## **Day of Surgery**

- Do not rinse or spit for 24 hours following surgery. Do not smoke, drink carbonated beverages, and or suck through a straw for one week. These things can cause the blood clot to not form and/or delay healing or result in dry socket.
- Constant pressure should be kept on the gauze put in your mouth for one hour, but clenching is NOT necessary. Just having the gauze between your teeth is fine. Clenching too much tires muscles and can make jaws more sore.
- After one hour, new gauze does not need to be put in your mouth unless there is still a flow of bright red blood occurring. A small amount of oozing is normal for several days following surgery.
- Take all medications as directed. Do not drink alcohol while taking narcotics. Do not take more medication than what is prescribed, as doing so could result in damage to your liver and/or kidneys. If you were given antibiotics take them until they are completed gone (Please note antibiotics may affect the effectiveness of birth control pills – please discuss this with your dentist or use other forms of birth control during this time). Narcotics can cause drowsiness, dizziness, and altered alertness. Activities that can be affected by the use of narcotics should be avoided (driving, fire arms, signing legal documents, etc...). THIS MEDICATION IS NOT TO BE SHARED, SAVED OR SOLD. It is for THIS period of time ONLY!
- Physical activity should be kept to a minimum for at least 48 hrs. Avoiding high impact activities helps prevent complications that delay healing and time away from duties.
- Healing is dependent upon nutrition and hydration. If you are not eating or drinking (64 ounces/day) you will heal more slowly. The type of food you eat is up to you. It is recommended to start with softer foods first (soup, oatmeal, eggs, mashed potatoes, etc...). As you are able to eat those foods well, you may try things that require more chewing. Avoid foods that are spicy, or can break into sharp pieces such as nuts, chips, or crackers near the surgical site.

## **Day after Surgery**

- 24 hours after surgery, begin rinsing with warm salt water rinses (1/2 tsp table salt in ½ glass warm water). Do this 3-4 times a day. Care should be taken not to rinse very aggressively as this can cause the blood clot to come out. You may also rinse with chlorhexidine mouthwash if prescribed. Avoid Listerine or alcohol mouthwashes for at least 5 days.
- Oral hygiene is important, and you should brush and floss your teeth to the best of your abilities as soon as you are able. This should begin the day of surgery. Avoid any vigorous swishing and spitting.

## **For Further Assistance**

- During business hours call or come to the dental office. (573-449-1918)
- For emergencies such as unstoppable bleeding, severe pain not controlled with medication, or severe swelling which occurs after hours, on holidays or weekends also call the dental office. Your call will be forwarded to our emergency line.

• **You should seek immediate dental/medical care (ER) if you experience any of the following:**

- 1) Rapid, exaggerated, painful swellings of the neck, face, or throat.
- 2) Excessive bleeding that is uncontrolled with biting down on gauze
- 3) Rise in normal body temperature at or above 101 degrees
- 4) Any adverse side effects to the prescribed medications such as rash, difficulty breathing, bloody stools, or hyper-excitability.

**What to Expect**

- **Numbness** – the local anesthetic will begin to wear off within 2 to 6 hours following surgery. If numbness remains longer than two days after surgery, make a follow-up appointment with your dentist to check the status.
- **Bleeding** - It is normal for blood to ooze or bleed occasionally for the first 24-48 hours following surgery. It is a good idea to sleep with a towel or something over your pillow to prevent blood from staining your pillow at night.
- **Swelling** – If your surgery involved cutting the gums and bone, then you will likely experience swelling. The swelling will increase and remain constant up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> day following surgery, then it will start to decrease in size. Immediately following surgery, an ice pack may be applied to your face directly over the surgical site. The ice pack should remain in place for a period of 15 to 20 minutes, and then removed for 15 to 20 minutes. This alternative sequence should continue throughout the first 24 hours after surgery. Heat, preferably moist heat, may be applied as needed after 24 hours. If your level of swelling continues to get worse after the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, you should come in to see the dentist as this could be a sign of an infection.
- **Pain** – When the local anesthetic wears off, you will feel pain. Taking your medication prior to the dental anesthetic wearing off will lessen your post-operative discomfort. The pain following surgery will remain constant, or could increase through the 3<sup>rd</sup> day following surgery. You should then begin to see a decrease in the levels of discomfort. If your level of pain continues to get worse after the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, you should come in to see the dentist as this could be a sign of an infection or dry socket.
- **Bad breath** – your breath will smell bad for about 3 weeks while the gum closes over the holes. Any use of mouthwash or other mouth rinses should be done very gently to avoid pulling out the blood clot.
- **Tobacco** – Avoid smoking for as long as possible to avoid dry socket and slowed healing (preferably 3 days at a minimum), avoid chewing tobacco until the holes in your mouth have healed.
- You will have holes where the teeth were for about 3 weeks. These will get smaller as the area heals.
- If sutures were placed, they will normally dissolve between 3-5 days.
- Depending on where and how your teeth were taken out, you may not be able to open your mouth more than ½-1 inch. This is due to the fact that as you open, you pull on the gums where incisions were made, and as it hurts you stop opening. The amount you can open will continue to increase from the 4<sup>th</sup> day up to a few weeks afterward.