

CARE FOLLOWING DENTAL PROCEDURES

Proper care following most dental procedures can reduce complications and speed the healing of the surgical area. Uneventful postoperative experiences in the past should not lull you with a sense of security from postoperative complications now or in the future.

1. **Protection of the blood clot:** maintain gentle pressure by biting on the gauze sponge that has been placed over the surgical area for at least 30 minutes. If bleeding continues, replace the sponge with another as provided and maintain pressure for a full 30 minutes. Bleeding in the form of oozing may continue beyond 24 hours in some individuals without need for alarm. If profuse and continued bleeding occurs—call this office. In the meantime place a warm soaked tea bag over the bleeding area, cover with cotton or gauze, biting firmly for 30 minutes. If tea is not available, soak a large wad of cotton or clean linen in vinegar and place this over the bleeding area as above for 30 minutes.

ORAL HYGIENE

- a. Do not rinse or use mouthwash for at least 24 hours. After 24 hours rinse with warm salt water (1 teaspoon of salt in 12 ounces of warm water), after each meal and prior to bedtime. Continue warm salt water rinses for 5-7 days.
 - b. Avoid all excessive activity, do not pick at the surgical site. Avoid alcoholic beverages and reduce the number of cigarettes you smoke by one half until healing is well advanced.
 - c. A soft toothbrush with a slight amount of toothpaste should be used to clean the areas of the mouth not involved by the surgical procedure. Do not use your electric toothbrush until we remove the sutures (if any). A clean mouth heals faster.
2. **Discomfort**—Surgical operations in the highly sensitive oral cavity can be expected to produce some post-operative discomfort.
 - a. If a prescription has been written for you, have it filled and take the medication as directed for relief of pain.
 - b. If no prescription has been given, you may take the following combination:
 - 2 -500 mg. extra strength Tylenol tablets
 - Or
 - 3-200 mg. ibuprofen (advil) tablets
 - and/or both at once if needed
 - Every 6 hrs. for the relief of pain
3. **Swelling and stiffness**—Swelling of the facial soft tissues may be due to bleeding beneath the oral tissues extending into the overlying tissues of the face. It may also be due to the invasion of the tissues with fluid and blood elements concerned in

tissue healing or in the elimination of infection. This swelling is often followed by discoloration. This is a perfectly normal post operative event and you should not be concerned if this happens in your particular case. This purplish black discoloration is the same as that seen in bruises of other parts of the body and will fade to a greenish-yellow, then yellow and back to normal.

4. To reduce ordinary immediate swelling and possible discoloration:

- a. Apply an ice pack on the face over the surgical area. 15 minutes ON and 15 minutes OFF. Do this for 6-8 hours following surgery.
- b. The day after surgery, apply heat to your face in any convenient form. At least 4 hours of heat should be applied to the face each day for 2-3 consecutive days or until sutures are removed.

5. Sharp boney projections—during the healing process, small sharp fragments of bone may loosen, and work up through the gum. These are not roots and often work out themselves. Return for their simple removal.

6. Sutures—if they were placed, do not fail to return for their simple removal on the appointment date given. Usually 5-7 days after surgery.

7. Diet instructions

Drink plenty of cool fluids after surgery such as water and fruit juice. Avoid carbonated beverages (soda) and very hot foods or drinks for at least 2 days. A soft non chewing diet is recommended for two weeks after surgery to allow the gum tissue to heal. It is also advisable to avoid acidic foods such as tomatoes, peppers, or citrus fruits and highly seasoned foods that may irritate the mouth. You may resume these foods in a few weeks after the mouth sutures are removed. Patients that maintain a good diet of soft foods generally feel better, have less discomfort, and heal better. A nutritious diet throughout the healing period is important to your comfort, temperament and healing. Chop food in smaller pieces or use a blender to puree. A daily multiple vitamin is recommended. Food supplements such as Metrecal, Nutrament, Ensure, Enrich, Sego, Instant Breakfast, etc. may be helpful. Also avoid foods that may cause trauma to the gums such as popcorn, chips or nuts.

Breakfast

Apple juice, water milk coffee, tea. Yogurt, cooked cereals such as oatmeal or cream of wheat. Scrambled eggs, cottage cheese, milk toast, applesauce.

Lunch and Dinner

Home cooked broth, boullion, soups. Ground beef baked or broiled fish, broiled or stewed chicken (finely chopped). Macaroni and cheese, scrambled eggs, bread softened with gravy. Baked or mashed potatoes. Asparagus, peas, carrots, lima beans, string beans(all mashed). Cottage cheese, canned barlett pears. Jell-O, puddings, pound cake. Milk shakes and ice cream.

Call Our Office if:

1. Bleeding from the surgical site after 24 hours.
2. Severe nagging or gnawing discomfort persists at the surgical site after 48 hours.
3. Elevation of temperature over 101 degrees develops orally.

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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Friday 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.