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Home care instructions following your surgery

Proper wound healing is dependent on good home care after your surgery. Please read the following instructions carefully (they may or may not all apply to you).

ACTIVITY: Please restrict physical activity, excessive speaking, and rest as much as possible on the day of surgery. **Avoid any physical activity** such as sports or any exercise for **5-7 days** after surgery. **No lifting over 10 lbs.**

MEDICATIONS: Unfortunately, most oral surgery procedures are accompanied by some degree of discomfort, usually peaking on the third day. In addition to the pain medication prescribed, it is recommended to take **600 mg of Ibuprofen** (Advil™ or Motrin™) **every 6 hours for 3-5 days**. You may alternate the two medications to maximize pain control and decrease swelling/ inflammation. Take pain medication before the anesthetic (“numbness”) has worn off to better manage pain. Take all medications with a full glass of water or food to help avoid nausea.

Avoid driving or operating heavy machinery while taking narcotic pain medication. **Do not** combine alcohol, tranquilizers, or sleeping pills with narcotic pain medication.

If you had **oral or IV sedation**, DO NOT drive, operate heavy machinery, or make legal decisions for the next 24 hours. You will need a driver to take you home and be with you the remainder of the day.

Antibiotics can reduce or cancel effects of oral contraception (birth control). If prescribed, take antibiotic as directed until it is all finished (even if you feel better).

SUTURES: Sutures may have been placed to hold gingival tissues in the proper position for ideal healing. Depending on the procedure, you may have dissolvable or non-dissolvable sutures. Dissolvable sutures will typically fall out within the first 2 weeks, and if they become undone, it is **not** an emergency. If you have sutures that are NOT supposed to dissolve (usually blue-colored) and become undone early, please call the office. Typically, the loss of one suture during healing is not a problem. **Do not disturb sutures with your tongue, toothbrush, or in any other manner since displacement will impair healing.**

INITIAL HEALING: Some bleeding or oozing is normal and should be expected for the first 24-48 hours after surgery. If moderate to excessive **bleeding** is noted, apply pressure with damp gauze or caffeinated tea bag (brewed, squeezed damp-dry, and adequately cooled before applying) on the area for 30-45 minutes. Remember that blood seen in your mouth is mixed with saliva. A little bit of blood will “dye” your saliva dramatically.

Swelling and inflammation is your body’s natural response to healing, and may increase in the first few days. Apply an **ice-pack** on your face near the surgical area for 20 minutes with a 10 minute break in between. Icing the area is most effective immediately after surgery and for the first 48 hours thereafter. If swelling is excessive, spreading, impeding your breathing, or continuing to enlarge after 3 days, please call the office.

You may experience **bruising**. Although rare, it is not serious and does not usually cause more pain. A warm compress (warm, damp face towel) may be used over bruised area (do not apply sooner than day 4).

ORAL HYGIENE: **Do NOT brush or floss** in the surgical area for at least 1 week. If you have non-dissolvable sutures, you may be required NOT to brush or floss the area for a longer amount of time (typically 2-3 weeks).

If a mouth rinse (Chlorhexidine, PerioGuard™, or Peridex™) has been prescribed, **begin using the day after surgery**. Soak the area with ½ cap-full amount 2 times per day for 1 minute then spit out. Substitute soaking with gentle swishing by day 3. Do not rinse vigorously or spit excessively. Do not eat or drink anything for 30 minutes following the rinse. Be aware the rinse may stain your teeth, stain your tongue, and alter taste. However, the stain is easily removed, and taste alteration will resolve after the rinse is discontinued.

DIET: Good nutrition is paramount to good healing. **Drink plenty of liquids.** If possible, chew on the opposite side of the surgical area. **During the first 24 hours,** you may eat cold, liquid foods such as milkshakes, smoothies, ice cream, yogurt, and protein shakes. Avoid sucking on straws (or any other suction in the mouth). **AVOID ANYTHING HOT IN TEMPERATURE FOR THE FIRST 24 HOURS!** Afterwards, you may have soft foods such as eggs, oatmeal, mashed potatoes, pasta, soup, ground beef/ chicken/ fish, and soft overcooked vegetables. No biting into anything (i.e. biting into hamburger, sandwich, apple). Break food into small pieces, and use a fork and knife. Avoid hard, fibrous, sharp, and sticky foods such as popcorn, chips, granola, nuts, seeds, and raw vegetables. **It is normal to experience sensitivity to cold, hot, and sweets for the first 4-6 weeks following surgery.**

SMOKING: Do not smoke for as long as possible after surgery (minimum of 48 hours). For optimal results, smoking should be ceased 1 week prior to surgery and 8 weeks thereafter. Cigarette and other forms of smoke have chemicals in it that can cause pain and compromise healing. Sucking on a cigarette can dislodge blood clots and make you bleed even more. Healing results are significantly worse in smokers than in non-smokers.

ALCOHOL: All intake of alcohol should be stopped until after your sutures have been removed and minimized for the next several weeks after suture removal to enhance healing.

SPECIAL CASES:

Soft tissue and gum grafting – DO NOT try to look at the graft site by pulling your lips or cheeks. This will cause undue stress on the graft and cause it to fail! DO NOT place excessive force on the grafted area. Sleep with extra pillow and avoid sleeping on the side of the graft. Do not be alarmed if the surface of the graft appears white as this is normal.

Implant surgery – Avoid any contact or chewing directly in the surgical area(s) for 5 weeks following the surgery as this can cause the implant to fail. If you experience persistent numbness the morning following implant surgery, call the office immediately.

Bone grafting – Your bone graft is made up of many particles. Do not be alarmed if you find some granules in your mouth for the first several days. The grafted area is over packed to allow for the loss of a small amount of particles. To minimize the amount of particles being dislodged, do not touch the area with your tongue or fingers or apply pressure to the area while eating. DO NOT try to look at the graft site by pulling your lips or cheeks. The material is moveable during initial stages of healing.

Sinus grafting – If you have sinus grafting, avoid sneezing and blowing your nose for one week. If you feel a sneeze coming on, sneeze with mouth open to minimize pressure changes in sinuses. It is common for you to have some sinus congestion and/or nasal bleeding anywhere from 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. Please use a decongestant like **Sudafed™ 12 hour formula (1 tablet 2 times a day for 1 week)**. Also use **Afrin™ nasal spray for 1 week (1 puff in each nostril 2 times a day for first 3 days, take 1 day off, and then 1 puff in each nostril 2 times a day for 3 more days)**.

If you have a night guard, denture, plate, partial, or flipper, ask your surgeon if you can wear it following surgery.

CONTACT EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) OR CALL “911” IF YOU HAVE SEVERE, UNCONTROLLED BLEEDING AND CANNOT REACH YOUR SURGEON, IF PATIENT HAS LOST CONSCIOUSNESS, OR HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.

AFTER HOURS EMERGENCIES CALL 972-538-3700 AND FOLLOW THE PROMPTS