

Post-Operative Instructions

What to expect after a surgical procedure:

- **If you had your procedure under IV sedation or general anesthesia** it is normal to feel drowsy for a few hours after your procedure. It is recommended that you go home and rest following your procedure. If you experience nausea from the anesthesia, small amounts of carbonated beverages or a light meal may help alleviate this.
- Swelling, discomfort, slight bleeding, and difficulty opening your mouth are normal after surgery. If you have concerns, please call the office.
- It is normal to have numbness to areas of your face, lips and mouth after surgery due to the local anesthetics used during your procedure. This numbness generally wears off within 6-8 hours following your procedure. In some cases, the numbness may last days to weeks.
- If you develop hives, rash, swelling of face/tongue/lips after taking medication that you were prescribed, stop taking the medication and call our office immediately.
- You may receive special instructions specific to your procedure. To obtain the best result and a smooth recovery please follow all instructions closely.

You may experience the following after your surgery. Please follow post-operative instructions carefully to facilitate a smooth recovery and call our office with any questions or concerns.

Pain & Discomfort

Once the numbness of the anesthetic starts to wear off, it is normal to experience discomfort after surgery. Pain tends to peak 3 days after a surgical procedure. It is recommended that you take pain medications as prescribed to help manage any post-operative pain.

- Start with over-the-counter pain medication such as Ibuprofen, Tylenol, Aleve, etc. It is safe to take Tylenol with Ibuprofen or Aleve.
- It is advised that Ibuprofen be started before the numbness begins to wear off to get ahead of pain, swelling and discomfort.
- You may alternate between Acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) and Ibuprofen (e.g., Advil or Motrin) every three (3) hours.
- If your surgeon has prescribed pain medications, take as directed. It is important to note that prescription pain medications usually contain acetaminophen (active ingredient in Tylenol). It is important that you **do not** take Tylenol with this prescription medication.
- Pain medications may cause nausea and vomiting. You should take medications with a light meal to help reduce nausea and vomiting from pain medications.
- **DO NOT operate a motor vehicle or mechanical equipment while taking prescription narcotic pain medication.**

Bleeding

It is normal to experience slight bleeding or oozing from the surgical site(s) following your procedure. This can be expected over the next 24-48 hours.

- Gauze packing has been placed over the site(s) by your surgeon to apply pressure to the surgical sites. This should be kept in place and firm pressure applied by biting on gauze for 30-60 minutes.
- Extra gauze has been provided and can be used to change out the gauze over the site(s) every 30-60 minutes until bleeding has stopped or is minimal.
- If bleeding seems excessive, bite firmly on a moistened tea bag or wet gauze for 30-60 minutes.
- If the bleeding does not slow down or subside call our office.
- If bleeding recurs at any time, gently rinse your mouth with cool water and place pressure over sites by biting firmly on gauze for 30 minutes.
- It is normal to experience oozing after eating or brushing your teeth for a few days following your procedure.
- **Avoid** heavy lifting, bending over, vigorous physical activity, vigorous rinsing, smoking, spitting, or drinking through a straw for the first 24-48 hours as these may disrupt the early stages of healing and prolong bleeding.
- Keeping your head slightly elevated while you rest will help prevent prolonged oozing.

Swelling

Swelling is expected following your procedure. Swelling generally reaches its peak at 24-48 hours after surgery. Swelling may also cause stiffness to your jaw and make it difficult to fully open your mouth. This is normal for the first week after healing.

- Apply ice to the outside of your face, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off following your procedure to help with swelling and discomfort. This should be done for the first 24-48 hours.
- After 48 hours, application of a moist warm compress may help relieve swelling and jaw stiffness.
- Keeping your head elevated will aid in limiting swelling.
- It is normal to have more swelling in the morning when first waking, especially if you do not sleep with your head elevated.
- Depending on your specific case, your surgeon may prescribe a steroid medication for post op-swelling. If so, take as directed.
- If swelling worsens after day 3 post-op and is accompanied by fevers, chills, drainage from surgical site or foul smell or taste, this is a sign of potential infection, call the office immediately.

Bruising

Bruising may occur on the outside of your face following your surgery. This is normal following certain surgical procedures. Bruising may extend below the surgical sites due to gravity. This is a normal process and should not cause alarm.

- Apply ice for the first 24-48 hours after surgery.
- After 48 hours, application of moist heat compress may help relieve bruising.

Nausea

You may experience nausea after your procedure due to anesthesia medications.

- If your procedure was completed under IV sedation, medications were given through your IV to reduce nausea and vomiting.
- You may have been prescribed medications to be taken as needed following your procedure to aid in the prevention of nausea and vomiting. Take these as directed.
- Narcotic prescription pain medication may cause nausea. DO NOT take on an empty stomach. Take with a small amount of food/light meal and or small sips of carbonated beverage to reduce nausea.

Infection

Signs of infection include: trismus (difficulty opening) that worsens after 3 days, swelling that worsens after 3-4 days, fevers/chills, drainage of pus, foul smell or taste, worsening pain.

- If you were prescribed antibiotics following your procedure, be sure to take them as directed to help prevent infection.
- If you believe you are experiencing signs of infection, call our office immediately.

Alveolar Osteitis (DRY SOCKET)

Dry socket is inflammation of the alveolar bone (bone that tooth was removed from). It is believed to occur from premature loss of the blood clot within the extraction socket, thereby delaying healing. Some may describe dry socket simply as painful delayed healing. Signs of dry socket include: worsening pain not well controlled by pain medication, pain that radiates along entire jaw or into ear, foul smell or taste, all in the absence of infection or other nearby dental disease.

- If you believe you are experiencing dry socket, call our office as you may need to have medications applied directly to the surgical site to relieve pain.
- Occasionally, you may need to return 24-48 hours after initial application of dressing to have a new dressing placed.
- The dressing is used only to alleviate pain while you continue to heal, it does not aid in healing.

Sinus communication

A possible risk during extraction of a maxillary (top jaw) tooth is development of an opening into your maxillary sinus through the extraction socket. The maxillary sinuses are air filled spaces that lie above and within close proximity to the roots of maxillary teeth.

If you were informed by your surgeon that a sinus communication has occurred, please follow these instructions:

- **DO NOT blow your nose for 2 weeks**

- **DO NOT hold in your sneezes.** If you have to sneeze, sneeze with your mouth open and without pinching your nose closed.
- **DO NOT SMOKE:** smoking increases the chance of breakdown of the closure of your sinus repair and increases the chance of persistent sinus communication
- **AVOID strenuous physical activity for a minimum of 7 days**
- **AVOID straining**

- You may experience sinus congestion for 1-2 weeks following your procedure. You may be prescribed decongestants and antihistamines to aid with this.
- You may experience slight nosebleed for several days. Call the office if it persists after application of pressure for 30 minutes.
- You may require a second surgical procedure to close the sinus communication if it persists.

The below instructions cover frequently asked questions following surgical procedures. Please contact our office if you have any additional questions.

Hygiene

- You should resume oral hygiene (brushing and flossing) following your procedure.
- It is recommended that you avoid brushing or flossing directly over the surgical site as doing so may disturb early stages of healing.
- 24 hours after your procedure you can rinse gently with warm salt water. Mix 1 teaspoon of salt with a glass of room temperature water.
- **DO NOT** forcefully spit after rinsing. Allow rinse to passively empty from your mouth.
- Avoid alcohol-based over the counter mouth rinses for 5 days following your procedure as they may cause discomfort.
- If a prescription mouth rinse has been prescribed (Chlorhexidine), use as directed.

Diet

- Hydration is important during the healing process. Be sure to consume adequate amounts of clear liquids.
- **AVOID ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES for one week following surgery and at any time you are taking antibiotics or prescription narcotic pain medication.**
- Liquids and soft foods are recommended for a few days (milkshakes, smoothies, yogurts, noodles, soups, mashed potatoes, eggs, etc.) following your procedure.
- You may want to avoid spicy or overly hot foods for a few days. Advance diet as tolerated.
- If you had bone grafting or dental implant placement(s), do not chew on the site. If you are wearing a temporary tooth replacement, do not wear it while eating, as pressure over the site may disturb healing of dental implants or bone graft and decrease overall success.

Smoking

- Try to avoid smoking altogether.
- **DO NOT SMOKE FOR AT LEAST 3 DAYS following surgery, preferably longer.**
- Refrain from using other tobacco products of a minimum of 3 days, preferably longer.
- Smoking and tobacco products will delay healing and increase the risk of complications, including dry socket.

Sutures

Sutures may have been placed during your dental procedure. If they were, they may be resorbable sutures or non-resorbable sutures.

- **Resorbable sutures:** will dissolve on their own over a few days to weeks post-op. These do not need to be removed by your surgeon. If they become loose and are becoming bothersome, you are encouraged to call the office to have an appointment scheduled for removal.
- **Non-resorbable sutures:** These sutures do not resorb and will need to be removed by your surgeon. It is normal that they may become loose and fall out on their own. Your surgeon will advise you as to when you should return for suture removal. This is usually 1-2 weeks following your procedure.

Physical activity

- Ensure you get adequate rest following your procedure.
- Avoid contact sports or vigorous physical activity for at least 3 days.

Post op visits

- You may have been given instructions to return for a post-operative visit. If needed, this is usually scheduled for 1-2 weeks after your procedure. The purpose of this visit is to check the healing of your surgical site and remove sutures, if needed.
- If you have any concerns and need to be seen sooner, call the office and we can usually arrange for a post-operative visit for the same day.
- If you were not given a post-operative appointment and have questions or concerns, call the office and we can answer your questions or arrange for a post-operative visit for the same day.

Antibiotics

- You MAY have been prescribed antibiotics following your surgery. If so, it is important you complete the course of antibiotics as prescribed.
- Consuming yogurt with active cultures may decrease the risk of diarrhea or other stomach issues while taking antibiotics.
- If you develop a rash, hives, or swelling after starting antibiotics, stop taking them and call our office immediately.
- **If you take birth control, it may be ineffective while on antibiotics.**

Regular Medications

- Following your procedure, you should resume taking your normally prescribed medications unless directed otherwise by your provider.

If you are experiencing a true medical emergency, you should call 911.

If you have an urgent question, you can call our office at any time at 980-435-4600.