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Post Operative Instructions

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

DAY OF SURGERY

1st Hour:

Bite down 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.

First 5 Days of 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 for at least 5 days since it is very detrimental to healing, and can lead to dry socket. No drinking through a straw or causing any type of suction (sports drinks, popsicles). No exercise for 5 days.

Oozing:

Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal. It may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the surgical areas and biting down firmly for 30-60 minutes. You will need to change the gauze every 60 minutes until the bleeding stops.

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 the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may substitute 1-2 tea bags (soaked in cold water, squeezed and damp-dried) for 30-40 minutes. Do not take them out to check. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

Swelling:

Often there is some swelling associated with oral surgery. You can minimize this by using ice cubes secured in a ziplock bag 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 24 hours after surgery. If you have been prescribed medicine to control swelling, be sure to take it as directed. After 36 hours, it is usually best to switch from ice to moist heat in the same areas. You can use a hot water bottle wrapped in a warm, moist towel, or just a warm moist towel.

Diet:

Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid hot foods for the 1st day. It is sometimes advisable, but not required to confine the first day's intake to bland liquids or

pureed foods. Avoid foods that are spicy, acidic, small or sharp (seeds, rice, tomatoes, and chips). Over the next several days you can progress to solid foods at your own pace. **DO NOT SKIP MEALS!** If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits as much as possible and follow directions from us or your physician regarding your insulin schedule.

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 medications vary widely among individuals. **IF YOU DO NOT ACHIEVE ADEQUATE PAIN RELIEF**, you may supplement each pill with an analgesic such as ibuprofen. Do not take additional Tylenol (acetaminophen) with Vicodin, Lortab or Hydrocodone. 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 6 hours after the anesthetic wears off; after that your need for medicine should lessen. **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE FOOD IN YOUR STOMACH** before taking any pain medication.

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 if repeated vomiting is a problem.

Sharp Edges:

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

Stitches: If you have them, they will come out on their own in 5-10 days, unless you have been instructed otherwise by your doctor.

Syringe:

ONLY USE SYRINGE FOR SOCKETS ON LOWER TEETH EXTRACTIONS. Start using it on the 3rd day after surgery to keep sockets clean. Fill it with warm water and irrigate open sockets, especially after eating. You will actually place the tip of the syringe into the opening of the socket. You will need to use the syringe until the socket completely closes (this could take up to several weeks).

Insert the tip of the syringe under the tissue and into the socket. Flush with warm water, turning the tip in each direction inside the socket. Rinse well until you retrieve no more food or debris. Use after each meal.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following the instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the doctor. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response. For after hours emergency, you may call the office to be directed to your doctor personally.