



# Post-Operative Instructions

for Patients Who Have Undergone Periodontal Surgery or Oral Surgery

Sometimes the after-effects of Oral Surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt, follow these guidelines or call our office for clarification.

## Day of Surgery

**First Hour:** Bite down gently, but firmly, on the gauze that has been placed over the surgical areas, making sure it remains in place. When you get home, discard the gauze and replace (with clean hands) every 20 minutes until the bleeding stops. If the gauze continues to be saturated with blood, use 1-2 pieces of gauze moistened with water and bite down for 20-30 minutes changing the gauze every 20-30 minutes until the bleeding stops.

**Oozing vs. Persistent Bleeding:** Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. A little bit of blood looks like a lot of blood when mixed with saliva. Bleeding should never be severe. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy, you can substitute the gauze for a moistened Black Tea Bag wrapped with moistened gauze. Again, bite down for 20-30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

**Exercise Care:** For the first 48 hours, DO NOT spit or drink through a straw. Anything that creates suction in the mouth could disturb the surgical areas and cause Dry Sockets. Smoking will be detrimental to healing (try not to smoke for 4-7 days post-operatively.)

**Swelling:** Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag, or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a thin towel and applied firmly to cheek adjacent to the surgical areas. This should be applied 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off, during the first 48 hours after surgery. The first night, you should sleep with your head in slightly elevated position (add an additional pillow). Place a towel on pillow in case there is bleeding.

**Pain:** Take prescribed medication as directed after surgery. Antibiotics should be taken as prescribed until gone and pain medication as needed. Medication can make you groggy and slow down your reflexes. **DO NOT DRIVE** an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Pain or discomfort following surgery is normal and should subside gradually each day. If pain persists, it may require our attention and you should call our office.

**Nausea:** Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Most often the pain medications are the cause. Nausea can be reduced by preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food and taking the pill with a large volume of water. Try to keep drinking plenty of clear fluids and minimize dosing of the pain medications, but call the office if you do not feel better.

**Diet:** The first day, try to have more of a liquid or pureed diet (soups, pudding, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.) Nothing hot and AVOID spicy foods, nuts, seeds, popcorn, crusty breads, etc. Which may get lodged in the socket areas.

## Instructions for Days to Follow

**Brushing:** After the first day, you may brush your teeth as usual, avoiding the surgical sites as much as possible. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

**Mouth Rinses:** DO NOT RINSE FOR THE FIRST 24 HOURS. If you are given a prescription mouth rinse, begin the following morning after breakfast. DO NOT rinse vigorously, allow the rinse to just roll around the mouth. DO NOT eat or drink anything for 30 minutes following rinse. Repeat after dinner. Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. If you were not given a prescription rinse, starting the third day after surgery, you may gently rinse with warm salt water. 1/4 teaspoon salt dissolved in 8 oz glass of warm water. Again, allow salt water to just roll around in the mouth, two times a day after meals.

**Warm Compress:** After the first 48 hours of applying ice, you may begin to use a moist, warm compress. You will apply the compress to the areas for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off. This will help decrease swelling and stiffness.

**Healing:** The first 3 days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is some swelling and maybe even some bruising. The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement. It is our desire that your recovery to be smooth and pleasant as possible. Following the instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call our office.