ORAL SURGERY POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

These instructions apply to most surgical procedures performed in the office. 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. Our number is: 904.398.1549

FOR 72 HOURS AVOID THE FOLLOWING:

NO SMOKING.

NO SUCKING THROUGH A STRAW.

NO SPITTING.

NO CARBONATED BEVERAGES SUCH AS SODA.

DAY OF SURGERY

FIRST HOUR: Bite down gently but 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 half hour unless the bleeding is not controlled. The packs may be gently removed after one half hour. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30-45 minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff for more comfortable positioning.

DO NOT disturb the surgical area today. DO NOT rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. You may brush your teeth gently. PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE for at least 72 hours since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause a dry socket. Use caution when standing up quickly. This might cause light-headedness and may or may not cause you to faint.

OOZING: Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. Bleeding may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the areas and biting on the gauze for 30-45 minutes at a time.

PERSISTENT BLEEDING: Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between teeth only and not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you
may substitute a tea bag for 20-30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

SWELLING: Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery. If you have been prescribed medicine for the control of swelling (Medrol Dose Pack), be sure to take it as directed.

PAIN: Unfortunately most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication. Take over the counter anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen, Advil or Motrin. We recommend for you to take 600-800mg of Ibuprofen every 6 hours for the first five days following surgery. All over the counter strengths of Ibuprofen come in 200mg tablets or capsules. You can take 3-4 tablets or capsules every 6 hours. Do not exceed 3200mg of Ibuprofen in a 24-hour period. Ibuprofen will help not only with pain but swelling as well. It will also reduce the need for prescribed narcotic pain medication. We recommend that you take your first dose of Ibuprofen before the local anesthetic or numbing medicine has worn for optimal pain control. Some patients find that stronger pain medication like narcotics cause nausea. Taking the pain medication with a small amount of food will reduce the nausea side effect. The effects of pain medication vary widely among individuals. Remember that the most severe pain is usually within the first 6 hours after the local anesthetic wears off. Your need for narcotic pain medication should lessen after that. If you find that you are taking large amounts of narcotic pain medication at frequent intervals, please call our office.

NAUSEA: Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. This can be caused by narcotic pain medications, swallowing a small amount of blood on an empty stomach or from sedation medications given during your procedure. 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 taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of narcotic pain medication. If your nausea does not resolve, please call our office.

DIET: Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to confine the first day’s intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc). It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket or surgical site areas. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. It is important not to skip meals. If you take nourishment regularly you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are a diabetic, maintain you normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.
FEVER: Slight elevation in body temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. Tylenol should be taken to bring the fever down. If your fever persists after the second day, please notify the office.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECOND AND THIRD DAYS

MOUTH RINSES: Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use 1/4 teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Lean over the sink, open your mouth and allow the rinse to fall into the sink. Do not rinse or spit forcefully. Repeat at least twice a day or as often as you like.

BRUSHING: Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

DRY SOCKET: After a tooth is removed, the tooth socket normally fills with a blood clot. This blood clot serves as a protective bandage and helps with proper bone healing of the socket. To reduce the risk of a dry socket, please AVOID SMOKING, SPITTING, SUCKING THROUGH A STRAW OR VIGOROUS MOUTH RINSING. Behaviors such as these will cause the blood clot to break up or dissolve prematurely and will leave the bony socket open or “dry.” This dry socket results in increasing pain around the fourth or fifth day following a tooth extraction.

SHARP EDGES: If you feel something hard or sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling bony walls which once supported the extracted teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call our office.

NUMBNESS: If numbness of the lip, chin or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. As reviewed in your consultation, this is usually temporary in nature, sometimes lasting weeks to months. You should be aware if your lip or tongue is numb, you could bite it and not feel the sensation. If your numbness persists after one week, call the office to schedule a follow up appointment.

DRY, CRACKED LIPS: If the corners of your mouth or lips are cracked or dry, this is likely from stretching your lips during surgery. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment such as vaseline.

DECREASED MOUTH OPENING: Normal swelling that occurs after oral surgery procedures causes stiffness of the jaw muscles and decreased ability to open your
mouth for a few days after surgery. Sometimes this can last up to one week. Eating soft food and taking Ibuprofen will ease this tightness and swelling.

HEALING: Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows. The first two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement. If you don’t see continued improvement, please call our office. If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, DO NOT use it for the first five days. Then use it daily according the instructions until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call our office.