

## INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY

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Oral surgical wounds usually heal quickly and without complication, if simple precautions are taken. It is our desire that your recovery is as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these simple instructions will assist you in your recovery, but if you have any questions about your progress, please call our office.

**THE FIRST FEW HOURS:** Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place for a minimum of 30 minutes. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 to 60 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (no less than every 30 to 45 minutes). Always use clean hands when placing new gauze.

**WOUND CARE:** A good blood clot will help healing. Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do not rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. You may brush your teeth gently, avoiding the surgical area. Avoid vigorous exercise for the first several days. If you smoke, please do not smoke for at least 72 hours, since this is detrimental to healing and may cause a dry socket. Avoid alcohol for the next several days.

**OOZING:** Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. This may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the areas and biting on the gauze for at least 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 the teeth only and they are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the gauze packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy, you may substitute a tea bag (soaked in very hot water, squeezed damp/dry and wrapped in a moist gauze pad) for 20 to 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

**SWELLING:** Oral surgery is often associated with post-operative swelling. This swelling is usually minimal and hardly noticeable when seen in a mirror. If swelling becomes severe, please call our office immediately as this may mean an infection is present that could become life threatening.

**PAIN:** Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort depending on the procedure and patient. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication. If you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage the discomfort better. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals. It is best to limit the use of pain medication as much as possible as overuse can lead to negative side effects without any added beneficial effects.

**Remember that the most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic wears off.** After that, your need for pain medication should lessen with time. *If you find yourself needing to take large amounts of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office.* While taking this medication please do not drive or perform any activities where loss of focus might result in an accident.

**If you have received medicine to make you feel less anxious,** you should rest for the remainder of the day, and during recovery time (normally 24 hours), you should not drive, operate complicated machinery or devices or make important decisions such as signing legal documents, etc.

**NAUSEA:** Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometimes 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 amount of water.

**DIET:** Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot or cold foods. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery, Avoid hard foods, which may be lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

**SHARP EDGES:** If you feel something hard or sharp edge in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling the 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.

**MOUTH RINSES:** FORTY-EIGHT HOURS after your surgery, begin using salt water mouth rinses. Use 1/4 teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily preferably after meals for one week after surgery.

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

**Remember, you just had a surgical operation. Be kind to yourself.**

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_.