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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING DENTAL SURGERY

Please read the following post-op instructions carefully. Sometimes the after effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of these instructions will apply.

BLEEDING—bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Change the gauze once it becomes complete saturated with blood, replacing it with the gauze we provided you (get it moist with a bit of water before replacing). Continue this process until the bleeding stops. Bleeding is usually minimal during the two hours post-surgery, and intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal. Gauze may be left out if it is only blood-tinged. Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal. Bleeding should never be severe. If it is, it usually means the gauze is being clenched between the teeth (rather than pressure being exerted over the surgical areas). Try repositioning the packs, and if bleeding persists or becomes heavy, you may substitute a tea bag soaked in hot water, squeezed damp/dry, and wrapped in a moist gauze for 20-30 minutes. You can also place crushed calcium tablets (or Tums with calcium) inside gauze, and place over surgical site. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please contact our office.

SWELLING—if you have been prescribed medicine for the control of the swelling, be sure to take it as directed. If necessary, apply moist heat to face after surgery. **DO NOT APPLY ICE TO YOUR FACE.**

ACTIVITY—Rest is encouraged for the remainder of the day after surgery. When it becomes necessary to get up, do so **SLOWLY**. If lying down, sit up for a few minutes with legs dangling, and then stand slowly to prevent fainting, walking with assistance, if needed. You must not drive or operate any machinery/devices or make important decisions the day of surgery or any time you are under the influence of narcotic pain medicine. Activity may be increased as tolerated the days following surgery.

DIET—liquid diet only on day of surgery, including Jell-O, juice, tea, coffee, Gatorade, chicken or beef broth, Crystal Light, etc. Depending on the surgery, you may be able to eat something more solid (potato/chicken noodle soup) later that evening. Progress to softer foods (e.g., mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs, baked fish, etc.) the day after surgery, as tolerated. **NO DAIRY PRODUCTS FOR 48 HOURS. NO SMOKING or CONSUMING ALCOHOL for one week. DO NOT SUCK ON A STRAW or DRINK CARBONATED BEVERAGES for one week.** All of these items can cause the clots to come out, thus causing dry sockets. Eat nourishing foods that can be tolerated with comfort, avoiding extremely hot foods. Avoid foods that may get lodged in socket areas, such as nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, chips, etc. It is important not to skip meals. If you regularly take in nourishment, you will feel better, will gain strength, and will have less discomfort, healing faster.

MEDICATIONS—numbing medication should wear off within 2-5 hours. When you can swallow a sip of water without drooling out of mouth, you should be able to swallow medications. For the **FIRST DOSE ONLY**, follow these instructions, taking 30 minutes apart and in this order: 1) nausea pill (we will prescribe Phenergan [promethazine] or Zofran [ondansetron]); 2) pain pill; and, 3) antibiotic. You may receive a fourth medication for swelling (Medrol dosepak). On day one, take these pills all together at night. On the days following surgery, take the remainder of all medications as directed on each bottle.

PAIN—unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication. If you take the first pill before the anesthetic wears off (about two hours after surgery), you will be better able to manage any discomfort. Effects of pain medication can vary widely among individuals. If you don't achieve adequate relief, you may supplement each pill with analgesic Motrin, aspirin, or ibuprofen. Some people may even require two of the pain pills at one time during early stages; however, this can add to the risk of an upset stomach. The most severe of the discomfort is usually within the first 5-6 hours after the anesthetic wears off. After the first day, the need for pain medication should lessen.

NAUSEA—nausea is not uncommon after surgery and can sometimes be caused by stronger pain medications. Preceding each pill with a small amount of soft food, and taking the pill with a large amount of water may reduce nausea. If nausea persists, try drinking clear fluids and minimizing pain medication. If repeated vomiting occurs, stop all medications, food, and liquids until the nausea subsides/stabilizes—approximately 4-6 hours or longer, if needed. Start medications back one at a time, 30 minutes apart, using ½ a pain pill instead of a whole one.

SHARP EDGES—if you feel sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is probably the bony walls that once 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 the tooth; the jawbone remodels itself, and the slivers of bone should work themselves out on their own.

On the 3rd post-operative day:

MOUTH RINSES—keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Within 2-10 days, the stitches will dissolve, and the socket(s) will open up. Food will easily get down into the socket(s). To keep the socket(s) clean, you must flush them immediately after you eat, using the irrigation syringe we provide you. Dissolve 1 tsp. of salt in an 8 oz. glass of warm water. Draw the salt water up into the syringe, and irrigate the socket(s) by placing the syringe tip into the socket(s) and gently flushing. **REPEAT THIS PROCESS IMMEDIATELY AFTER EACH TIME YOU EAT.**

**** BE SURE TO CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ****

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