

## Post-Operative Instructions

Any surgical procedure in the mouth is followed by some oozing, swelling and discomfort. It is important that these instructions be followed carefully. They may prevent needless alarm as well as post-surgical complications. **IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT ABOUT ANYTHING, AT ANY TIME, PLEASE CONTACT THIS OFFICE (916) 929-6789.** Calls after hours are received by the answering service and will be promptly returned.

---

**PAIN** Take pain medications as instructed. It is usually best to eat something light when you first arrive home after surgery and then take your first pain pill. Likely, you will still be numb and not having pain but, getting ahead of the pain can lead to an easier recovery. If you wait until the numbness wears off (and you begin experiencing discomfort), you may fall behind the pain because it can take up to an hour after taking the pain medicine for it to begin working. Once you are no longer numb, it will be easier to judge if and when you need pain medicines. At this time, many patients only require over the counter pain medications such as ibuprofen. If medicine does not relieve the pain, please call our office. Expect moderate discomfort, nausea, swelling and oozing in the immediate 24 hour period after surgery. **If you develop hives or a rash at any time, immediately contact this office.**

---

**SWELLING** Applying ice packs over the affected area **IMMEDIATELY** following surgery will sometimes minimize swelling. Keep in place 20 minutes and then remove for 10 minutes; repeat for up to 24 hours while awake. Some swelling is expected and will vary with the difficulty of the surgery as well as with the individual reaction of the patient. Maximum swelling is expected by the third day at which time warmth applied to the area (e.g. warm washcloth) may make it feel better. Ice also may still be useful to reduce swelling. After surgery, try to keep your head elevated; for example when sleeping use two pillows to assume a semi-upright position.

---

**BLEEDING** You may be instructed to bite on a gauze pack to stop the bleeding. (Gauze likely will not be used if implants or bone grafts were placed.) Do not change the gauze pack too frequently as this disturbs the blood clot. The gauze is used to apply pressure and not primarily to absorb fluids. A certain amount of seepage is expected and beneficial and may occur until 24 to 36 hours after surgery. If bleeding is **EXCESSIVE**, place a folded gauze pack or moistened tea bag directly over the socket (extraction site) and close your jaw firmly for one or two hours to apply pressure directly to the bleeding site. Repeat twice. To be effective, it is important that the gauze is directly over the area where surgery was performed.

---

**NAUSEA** Nausea may be caused by swallowing blood, taking pills on an empty stomach, or occasionally due to the surgery or anesthetic. For relief, ginger ale or 7-up<sup>®</sup>, etc may be sipped slowly. **DO NOT USE A STRAW** because suction on a straw may disrupt the blood clot and tissue healing. If clear liquids are tolerated, advance your diet to bland foods. Sometimes, medications can cause nausea. If nausea persists while taking a clear liquid diet, call our office.

---

**Mouth Care** Do not rinse the mouth for any reason for 24 hours after surgery. Do not disturb the blood clot in the socket in any way. Do not spit, because this causes more bleeding. 24 hours after surgery rinse with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon in a glass of warm water). Hold in the mouth and swish very gently around the surgical area for two full minutes. Do this 4 or 5 times daily for 3 or 4 days. Dr. Delmore may also have you use a prescription mouth rinse. Start gently brushing teeth 24 hours after surgery. An irrigating syringe will be given to you at the time of surgery or at a post-operative visit, please use as instructed.

---

**DENTURES** **IF YOU HAVE HAD IMMEDIATE DENTURES PLACED, DO NOT REMOVE.** Your dentist will remove the dentures the following day upon your visit to his or her office. Additional instructions will be given by your dentist.

---

**DIET** Drink plenty of water and fruit juices, milk shakes, or lukewarm soups. Cool is better than hot as heat promotes bleeding. **DO NOT USE A STRAW** because suction on a straw may disrupt the blood clot and tissue healing. The day after surgery, stay on a soft diet, i.e. cream of wheat, scrambled eggs, noodles, and soft cooked vegetables. Thereafter, advance to a normal diet as tolerated. However **avoid for six weeks** anything that might get stuck in the extraction site such as: rice, nuts, popcorn, seeds, granola, strawberries, blackberries, quinoa, polenta, couscous, barley, granola bars or any other chewy energy or protein bars, crunchy chips or crackers.

---

**ELIMINATION** Normal intestinal action is essential. Codeine will sometimes cause constipation. If this is a problem, a mild laxative may be taken the day after surgery.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Patients should always be careful not to hurt themselves as anesthetics and prescription pain medications make most people unsteady or dizzy. Drowsiness is common after an anesthetic and should be expected to last the remainder of the day. The patient should not be left unattended. **Do not drive, operate machinery or make major decisions for 24 hours after anesthesia or if taking prescription pain medication.**
- It is possible that a few days after surgery a severe earache and throbbing on the side of the face may develop. If this should happen, the patient may take the pain medication as directed on the bottle until it is convenient to come into the office. This condition is probably a neuralgia from air contacting the nerves in one of the sockets. Upon patient's return to the office, packing may be placed to keep air from the socket and give comfort.
- Occasionally, a patient may find that after several weeks he/she may again experience sudden swelling. This is usually an inflammation from food working down into the newly forming tissue where the tooth was removed and irritating the area. At the earliest convenient time, the patient should return to the office and have the food rinsed out.
- During the healing process, sharp fragments of bone may work up through the gums. If this condition occurs, please return to the office for their removal.
- Extensive oral surgery is a procedure comparable to extensive surgery in other areas of the body. A certain percentage of people will experience more complications or an extended healing period.