

Post-Operative Instructions for Periodontal Surgery

Congratulations! You have finished a very important phase of your periodontal treatment and now it is time to begin the healing process. It is important to understand that some discomfort, swelling and bruising is normal. Every patient is different and there is no way of predicting if you will experience any of these symptoms. The medications that have been prescribed to you will help keep you comfortable for the next few days. **Please follow the instructions carefully when taking these medications.**

Activity: You are advised to take things relatively easy for the next 24 hours and to keep your head and feet elevated. Do not do any strenuous activities such as running, heavy lifting, mowing the lawn, cleaning the house, etc. for 24-48 hours.

Smoking: If you smoke, we recommend that you NOT smoke for the next 3-4 days and preferably decrease smoking by 50% or more for the next 2-3 months. The heat and chemicals from the smoke irritate the surgical area, resulting in prolonged and more painful healing, an increase in the risk for infection, and possible failure of treatment.

Blowing Your Nose: Some surgeries in the upper jaw region may be in proximity of your sinuses. We recommend that you wipe your nose instead of blowing it for the next 2-3 weeks. This will prevent premature opening of the sinus that can result in an infection. If nasal congestion occurs, you may use an over-the-counter nasal spray.

Antibiotics/Pain Meds: Not all surgical procedures require antibiotics. If you are given an antibiotic prescription, be sure to take the antibiotic for the total number of days as directed on the prescription label. Please do not discontinue the antibiotic unless you suspect an adverse reaction (rash/itching), in which case, contact us **immediately!** It is also very important that you take the first pain tablet **before** the anesthetic wears off, then around the clock for the first 24 hours. After 24 hours, take as needed to keep you comfortable. Always take pain medication with food or a glass of milk to decrease nausea/vomiting.

Bandages: If a bandage (packing) has been placed, it should stay in place until you return to our office in 5-7 days, at which time it will be removed. **DO NOT BRUSH around the packing!** Brush and floss the rest of your teeth normally. The packing will look like pink bubble gum and if it becomes loose or portions of it come off, **do not panic.** Gently push it back in place or, if it cannot be put back in place, simply remove it. If it comes completely off within 3-5 days after surgery, contact our office for advice. Otherwise, we will remove it at your next visit.

Oral Hygiene: **Do not brush or floss the surgical area for the first 10-14 days!** Brush all the rest of your teeth normally but stay away from the surgical area. A prescription mouthwash (Chlorhexidine) will be dispensed at your surgical appointment and should be swished **very gently** in the surgical area 2 times per day (directions are on the bottle). Do not eat or drink anything 30 minutes **before or after** using this mouthwash as it will decrease the effectiveness of the medication. You may begin **lightly** brushing the surgical area 10-14 days following the surgery with a very soft bristled toothbrush but do not floss or use an electric toothbrush until instructed. You will be instructed on how to clean the surgical site at your evaluation appointment in 2-3 weeks.

Bone Graft: If a bone graft was part of your procedure you may notice small particles that may feel like sand in your mouth for the next several days. This is okay, but remember to **gently** use the prescribed mouthwash and do not create any suction when spitting out. This will minimize the loss of extra bone particles.

Diet Following Surgery: It is very important for you to maintain a well balanced diet during your healing period. **You do not have to stay on a liquid diet.** You may eat a variety of foods as long as you can chew them easily. Foods such as soup, mashed potatoes, cottage cheese, macaroni and cheese, yogurt, powdered protein supplement drinks, pudding, canned fruit, soft cooked vegetables and easy to chew meat (in small pieces) should be tolerated well. The only foods to avoid are those with shells, husks, sharp edges, those that are spicy or those that take a lot of force to chew. Try to avoid chewing on the surgical side for at least the first week.

~ POSSIBLE PROBLEMS ~

Bleeding: We try very hard not to involve major blood vessels in the areas of surgery; however, the small vessels may continue to ooze for a couple days following surgery. If you have caused the area to bleed, or if the persistent oozing is bothersome, put your feet up, elevate your head and place a well-moistened tea bag in your mouth over the bleeding site for several minutes. This will usually retard the bleeding significantly. If you feel that you are having unexplained or excessive bleeding and the teabag is not effective within 20-30 minutes, please call us.

Swelling/Bruising: Regardless of the use of ice packs, you still may experience a certain amount of swelling or bruising based on the type of surgery you have had. It will often take 7-10 days for the swelling to decrease. It is a good idea to use an ice pack for the first 24 hours after surgery and then use moist heat such as a warm washcloth or a heating pad to control any swelling that maybe present. If you are concerned about the amount of swelling you are experiencing, **please call us.** If you have been prescribed a medication for swelling be sure to take as directed until it is completely gone. Bruising is not uncommon and should not be cause for alarm. Your body is just responding to your treatment.

Fever: It is not uncommon to run a slight temperature following surgical treatment. Drinking a lot of liquids will generally control the temperature increase but if your temperature elevates to 101 degrees or higher, **please call us.**

Tooth Sensitivity: The teeth are frequently very sensitive, especially to cold, for several weeks or months after surgery. This sensitivity is usually temporary and will decrease more rapidly with good daily brushing. Although flossing helps as well, wait till you are instructed to begin flossing the area.

Increased Tooth Mobility: The teeth in the surgical area are often more mobile for a few weeks after surgery. Ultimately the teeth and the gums will tighten up to the strength they were before surgery.

Sore Throat: It is not uncommon to have a sore throat following surgical treatment. If this should occur, treat yourself as you would for a common sore throat with lozenges and salt water rinses.

We are always happy to answer any questions or concerns you might have. Please feel free to call us.