Bleeding: It is not abnormal to experience slight bleeding after surgery. Your saliva may be tinged with blood for up to 24 hours after the procedure. A gauze pack will be placed over the surgical site after the procedure. Please leave the gauze in place over the site for at least two hours, maintaining biting pressure. Do not forcefully spit or irrigate the surgery site, as this might cause increased bleeding. If bleeding persists, you may control it with pressure. To do so, moisten a clean gauze and place it directly over the extraction site and apply moderate biting pressure for about ½ an hour. You may repeat if necessary. *Note: Patients having a sinus augmentation and bone graft may experience bleeding through the nose for up to twenty-four hours after surgery.

Pain: Unfortunately, it is relatively common to experience discomfort and pain for the first few days after surgery. Take pain medications as necessary; please follow the instructions on the prescription label. Pain medications are most effective when taken before local anesthesia “wears off” and normal sensations return. For the first day, it is recommended to take pain medication even if pain is minimal, as it is easier to prevent pain than to decrease it. Pain medication should not be taken on an empty stomach. Narcotic pain medications (ex. codeine, hydrocodone, oxycodone) are likely to cause gastrointestinal upset such as nausea, vomiting and constipation and taking the medication with food (or after recently eating) will decrease the likelihood of these side effects. Other narcotic side effects include drowsiness, dizziness and itching. If you experience these side effects please discontinue the medication. As an alternative you may take an over-the-counter pain medication as necessary, or please call our office if you need any assistance. *Note: You may supplement narcotics with ibuprofen (about 600 mg) or extra strength Tylenol® (500 mg) if you need added pain relief.

Swelling: Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and the side of the face is very common after oral surgery. Swelling is a natural response to surgery and the body’s repair process. Swelling generally become apparent the day after surgery and reaches its maximum about two to three days after surgery. Immediate and consistent use of ice packs will help to minimize swelling. After wrapping it in a paper towel or towel to protect your skin, apply an ice pack to your face outside the surgery site for twenty minutes on, twenty minutes off for the first twenty four hours. If you don’t have commercial ice packs, you may prepare some by putting damp washcloths in small zip lock freezer bags. These should be placed in your freezer with ample time so that they will be ready for use when you return home from your procedure.

Bruising: Another common and normal phenomenon after surgery is bruising. It may present over the surgery site and to the lower chin area as a black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration. This discoloration is due to the spreading of blood underneath the tissues. It may occur two to three days after surgery and persist for up to 14 days post operatively. Applying moist heat to the affected area may help to speed up removal of the discoloration.

Nausea: Anesthesia medications as well as medications prescribed for pain (especially narcotics) can cause nausea. It is important to avoid taking any medications on an empty stomach – take all medications with a small amount of food. If you feel nauseated or sick to your stomach, drink clear liquids such as ginger ale, 7-Up, apple juice, broth or try eating toast and crackers.
**Diet:** Drink clear fluids and eat soft nutritious foods after surgery. You may also increase your vitamin C intake – it helps the healing process. Do not drink alcohol or hot liquids. Avoid acidic foods such as tomatoes, orange juice, and citrus fruits until the surgery site has healed (approximately two weeks). Do not drink through a straw for at least 48 hours. Be cautious until the anesthesia wears off completely, as you might unknowingly injure yourself due to lack of sensation. If you had surgery on one side of your mouth, favor the other side while chewing for the first few days.

**Oral hygiene:** Do not neglect hygiene, as an accumulation of food and other debris might promote inflammation and infection. A gentle rinse with a warm salt water solution (1/2 teaspoon salt in 12 oz. of water) can be started the night after surgery. Starting the day after surgery, rinse with the salt water solution after each meal and brush your teeth as normal. Do not brush the surgical site for four to five days. If you were prescribed chlorhexidine mouthwash, it should be started the day after surgery.

**Activity:** Please limit any strenuous activity for two to three days post-operatively. Strenuous activity, exercise or otherwise, may increase or promote bleeding. Allowing two to three days of rest will help reduce bleeding and minimize swelling. For patients who have received anesthesia as part of their procedure, please also note the following: Anesthetics affect everyone differently. You might feel drowsy for a short period of time up to 24 hours. You should return home immediately after discharge and lie down with your head elevated until all effects of the anesthesia have subsided. Resting is the best way to allow your body to recover from the effects of the anesthesia. Please walk slowly and take your time when you start moving around, sudden changes in movement can result in nausea and/or dizziness. An adult should be with you at all times for the first 24 hours after surgery. Do not drink alcohol, drive a car, operate machinery, or undertake any responsible activity/business matters for 24 to 48 hours after your surgery. Anesthesia medications are psychoactive and may affect your judgment. Please call our office if, at any time, you have questions or concerns or if you are experiencing any unusual symptoms following your sedation.

**Fever:** It is normal for your body temperature to be slightly elevated for 24 hours after surgery. Please drink sufficient amounts of clear liquids to keep your body hydrated. If you experience a high temperature or a persistent low-grade temperature (still present after 24 hours have passed), please contact our office.

**Smoking/Alcohol:** Smoking and use of alcohol delays the healing process and also predisposes you to infection. Infection can result in the failure of an implant or bone graft. Do not smoke or consume alcohol until the incision line is completely healed (approximately two weeks).

**Sutures:** To help minimize post-operative bleeding and aid in healing, sutures are placed in the area of surgery. They may become dislodged – this is no cause for alarm, just remove the suture from your mouth and discard it. The sutures are dissolvable and should completely dissolve on their own in
about three to ten days. If they are still present at your post-op appointment, our office will remove them.

**Medications:** It is very important that you take any and all medications *as prescribed*. Each medication has a unique purpose in your recovery and the instructions are based on your body (weight etc.). Discontinue the antibiotic medication if a rash develops or an upset stomach persists, and **report this to our office immediately.** **Women please note:** If you are currently taking oral contraceptives, please be aware the certain antibiotics will *decrease* the effectiveness of your oral contraceptives and alternative methods should be utilized for the duration of, and period of time surrounding, the antibiotic use.

**Wearing your prosthesis:** You should not use partial dentures, flippers, or full dentures until your post-operative appointment, unless the doctor has specified otherwise. If you have a temporary flipper to wear, do not insert it until all numbness in the area has subsided. It should not touch your gums in the area of the surgery when you insert it. If it touches the gums in the surgical area, it may cause ulceration of the wound edges and breakdown of suture margins – this can lead to the loss of the implant or bone graft. If you have questions regarding the fit of your flipper, partial dentures or complete dentures, please do not wear it until you can be seen by our office.

*If you have any questions or concerns regarding your surgery or post-operative recovery, please contact our office.*