

Carter Family Dentistry

Post-Operative Surgery Instructions

Please read the following instructions carefully. The after-effects of oral surgery are quite variable, so not all of these instructions will apply to you. At a minimum, you must control bleeding, provide for good nutrition, maintain adequate pain control, and provide proper oral hygiene/wound care.

Control of Bleeding

Bleeding after the procedure will continue for 6-10 hours and may slowly continue for up to 24-48 hours, depending on the extent of surgery. Bite down on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not being controlled. If active bleeding persists after one hour, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30-60 minutes. The gauze may be changed as necessary and may be adjusted for more comfortable positioning.

Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal. Placing fresh gauze over the surgical areas and biting down for 30-60 minutes can control it. Maintaining the head in an elevated position (use of a recliner or several pillows) will also help to reduce bleeding and swelling. Bleeding should never be severe. If it is, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between your teeth rather than exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning fresh packs. DO NOT USE STRAWS OR SPIT FORCEFULLY as this may dislodge a clot and cause the surgical site to bleed again. 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 or 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office 770-736-5545.

Exercise Care

Do not disturb the surgical area today. DO NOT RINSE vigorously or probe the area with any objects or your fingers. You may brush your teeth gently. DO NOT SMOKE for at least 48 hours, since it is very detrimental to healing, and may cause dry sockets.

Swelling

Often there is some swelling associated with oral surgery that will reach its peak in around 48 hours and may take 7-10 days to resolve. You can minimize this by using a cold pack or ice bag wrapped in a towel and applied to face or cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 24-48 hours after surgery. If you have been prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed.

Fever

A slight fever is not uncommon the first few days after surgery (temperature to 100.5 F). If you have a high fever or fever persists, please call our office at 770-736-5545.

Operating A Motor Vehicle

Please do not operate any machinery or a motor vehicle for 24 hours after intravenous sedation, or if you are taking any prescribed narcotic pain medicine (Percocet, Oxycodone, Vicodin, Hydrocodone, Tylenol with Codeine). Also, do not consume any alcohol for 24 hours after intravenous sedation, general anesthesia or while taking any prescription pain medications.

Sutures

Sutures (or “stitches”) may be placed to reapproximate tissue and help control bleeding. These sutures are usually dissolvable and do not need to be removed. If needed, the remaining sutures can be easily removed at a 7-10 day post-op appointment.

Pain

Unfortunately most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. If you have no history of allergy to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications like ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) we recommend taking this prior to the local anesthetic wearing off, and maintaining a constant regimen for at least 3-5 days. If pain is more severe, a narcotic pain medicine may be needed. Be aware that narcotic pain medicine may cause upset stomach, which may include nausea, vomiting, or constipation. PLEASE TAKE ALL MEDICATION PRESCRIBED WITH SOME FOOD ON YOUR STOMACH to avoid many of these side effects. Effects of pain medicines vary widely among individuals. Remember that the most severe discomfort is usually just after the anesthetic wears off, and between the 3rd and 4th days after the procedure. Please keep the ibuprofen in your system even if the areas are not hurting because it will help alleviate swelling and allow your body to heal faster.

Diet

On the day of surgery, we ask that you avoid hot foods because they may prolong bleeding. Cold soft foods (such as ice cream, milk shakes, instant breakfast, puddings, and yogurt) are ideal. Over the next several days you may progress to solid foods at your own pace. It is important not to skip meals! Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, grits, rice etc. which may get lodged in the socket areas. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits as much as possible and follow our instructions or those from your physician regarding your insulin schedule.

Mouth Rinses

Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. After 24 hours, use ¼ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily and always after eating for the next five days. We may prescribe an antibiotic rinse (chlorhexidine, Periogard, Peridex) for certain procedures. This rinse should be used in the morning and at bedtime after routine mouth care. At bedtime do not eat, drink, or rinse your mouth after using the medicated rinse.

Sharp Edges

If you feel sharp edges in the surgical areas with your tongue it is probably the bony walls that originally 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 tooth and, if necessary we will remove them. Please call if you are concerned.

Sinus Precautions

Some procedures in the back part of the upper jaw may involve entry into the sinus cavity. If you are advised of this, please follow these precautions for 10 days after surgery. Do not blow your nose vigorously or sneeze holding your nose. Flying may also increase sinus pressure and should be avoided. Decongestants such as Drixoral, Dimetapp, or Pseudoephedrine will help reduce pressure in the sinuses. You may also be given a prescription for antibiotics. Please take these as directed.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. If you have questions, please call our office 770-736-5545.