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Post-Operative Instructions

Please read the following instructions carefully. The after-effects of oral surgery are quite variable, so not all of these instructions may 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 surgery may continue for several hours. Bite down firmly 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 40-60 minutes. The gauze may be changed as necessary and may be dampened and/or fluffed for more comfortable positioning.

Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal. It is typical for bleeding to continue for a few hours after simple extractions and for several (6-10) hours after more complex surgery such as removal of impacted teeth. Placing fresh gauze over the surgical areas and biting down firmly for 30-60 minutes may 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. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy; you may substitute a tea bag (soaked in warm water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in moist gauze) for 20-30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office (770)-973-0544.

Exercise Care

Do not disturb the surgical area today. **DO NOT SUCK THROUGH A STRAW OR SPIT.** **DO NOT RINSE** vigorously or probe the area with any objects or your fingers. **DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 72 hours, since it is very detrimental to healing. You may brush your teeth gently beginning 24 hours after surgery.

Swelling

Often, there is some swelling associated with oral surgery that will reach its peak around 48 hours and can take 7-10 days to resolve. You can minimize this by using a cold pack or ice bag wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to face or cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 12-24 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 during the first few days after surgery (temperature to 100.5°F). If you have a high or persisting fever, please call us.

Operating a Motor Vehicle

Please do not operate any machinery or motor vehicle for 24 hours after sedation or if you are taking any prescribed narcotic pain medicine (Percocet, Oxycodone, Vicodin, Norco, Hydrocodone, Tylenol with Codeine). Also, do not consume any alcohol for 24 hours after intravenous sedation 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. You will be reappointed to take the sutures out if they are not dissolvable.

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. If the pain is more severe, a narcotic pain medicine may be needed. You should not take the narcotic at the same time as the Ibuprofen; instead, you should alternate them every three hours. Be aware that narcotic pain medicine may cause upset stomach, which may include nausea, vomiting or constipation. We recommend taking both the narcotic and the Ibuprofen with a small amount of food. The side effects pain medicines vary widely among individuals.

Diet

On the day of surgery, we ask that you avoid hot foods that will prolong bleeding. Cold soft foods (such as ice cream, milk shakes, instant breakfast, puddings, pancakes, smoothies, and yogurt) are ideal. Over the next several days you can progress to solid foods at your own pace. **It is important to not skip meals!** Avoid foods like nuts, chips, 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. You should start gentle rinsing 24 hours after your surgery. 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 for five days. We may prescribe an antimicrobial rinse (Chlorhexidine, Periogard, Peridex) for certain procedures. This rinse should be used in the morning and at bedtime after routine mouth care. Do not eat, drink or rinse your mouth for an hour 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 or grafting material used during surgery. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the first week or two after surgery. They are not pieces of tooth and we will remove them if necessary. Please call if you are concerned.

Sinus Precautions

Some procedures in the back part of the upper jaw may be closely involved with the sinus cavity. If you are advised of this, please follow these precautions for 14 days after the surgery. Do not blow your nose. If you need to sneeze, do not hold your nose. You may sneeze with your mouth open. Flying in pressurized aircraft may also increase sinus pressure and should be avoided if possible. Decongestants such as Actifed, Afrin, Dimetapp or Sudafed 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. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have additional questions, do not hesitate to call Dr. Cohen or Dr. Weitzner. Heavy bleeding or difficulty breathing are emergencies and require immediate attention.

Office: 770-973-0544

Dr. Cohen's Cell Phone: 404-909-5223

Dr. Weitzner's Cell Phone: 404-219-1378

Metro Atlanta Emergency: 911