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### *Surgical Post Operative Instructions*

You have had a surgical procedure, and this requires diligent care to ensure proper healing. Please follow all of the following instructions and do not hesitate to call our office with any questions or concerns.

It is important to take all medications as directed. If antibiotics were prescribed, it is very important to take them until they are gone, even if you are feeling better. Failure to do so can result in drug resistant bacteria, or super-infections. If pain medications were prescribed, do not take more than prescribed and only take as needed.

It is normal to have the following happen after oral surgery:

**Bleeding** is a normal part of the period immediately following oral surgery. A small amount of bleeding or oozing can persist for up to 24 hours. We have placed gauze over the extraction site and you should bite on it firmly until: \_\_\_\_\_.

If after you remove the gauze, you are still having noticeable bleeding, place another moistened, folded gauze over the area and bite for 30-60 minutes. It is the pressure, not the gauze that will stop the bleeding. It is important that you bite down with firm pressure and do not peek or release that pressure. We recommend you set a timer. Please call our office at 320-629-2282 if bleeding is persistent or heavy.

**Pain** will vary from person to person. Multiple studies have shown that the most effective pain relief combination is extra strength acetaminophen and Ibuprofen. Do not exceed 3000 mg acetaminophen in a 24 hour period. Ice placed on your cheek in the area that the surgery was can help reduce swelling and discomfort. Keep your head elevated above your heart as this will help reduce discomfort and swelling. Everyone is different, however most people reach the peak amount of pain at about 2-3 days after surgery.

**Swelling** may occur after surgery. Ice will help relieve swelling as well keeping your head elevated above your heart. Limiting your physical activity will also help reduce your swelling.

**Sutures** if placed, will dissolve on their own in 3-10 days, unless otherwise noted.

**Difficulty opening your mouth**, also known as trismus is normal and is caused by muscle swelling and spasms. Trismus usually resolves on its own within a few days. If it persists, try using a healing pad in front of your ears and gently stretching your mouth open. If it persists without improvement after 7-10 days, please call our office.

## Caring for yourself after surgery

**Diet**-Try not to skip meals. Good nutrition is key to wound healing. Start with clear liquids such as juice or broth for your first meal. After this you may start with any kind of liquid or soft foods. Most patients are able to return to a normal diet after 3-5 days. It is important that your fluid intake be adequate. Adults should consume about 8 glasses of fluids each day.

- Avoid drinking through a straw as this can dislodge the blood clot and cause a dry socket
- Do not suck on candies as this can dislodge the blood clot and cause a dry socket
- Avoid drinking carbonated or alcoholic beverages
- Avoid hot and spicy foods
- Avoid foods that can become lodged in the socket such as rice
- Avoid foods that have sharp pieces such as chips and nuts

**Oral Hygiene** is key to an uneventful healing process. You should gently rinse your mouth with water after each meal. Avoid mouthwashes for the first two weeks after surgery unless recommended by your doctor. You should brush your teeth not in the area of surgery as normal and very gently brush the area of surgery with a soft toothbrush beginning the day after surgery. Warm salt water rinses are recommended 2-3 times per day for the first two weeks after surgery.

**Activity**-it is important to avoid strenuous activity for 3- 4 days following surgery. Exercise and heavy lifting may increase swelling, pain and/or bleeding. Gradually increase your activity to pre-surgery levels as your diet returns to normal.

**Smoking** has been shown in multiple studies to impair wound healing. Smokers are three times more likely to get a dry socket compared to those who don't use tobacco. We recommend avoiding any tobacco use for at least 7 days after surgery to minimize this risk.

## Complications

**Dry Socket** is a breakdown of the normal healing process after dental extractions. It can occur in up to 10% of extraction patients. These usually occur about 3-5 days after surgery and symptoms can include increasing pain medications, referred pain in the ear and pain that wakes you up in the night. If you develop these symptoms and have not been taking ibuprofen, start taking 3 tablets every 4 hours. If this does not relieve your pain, please notify our office. We can place a medicated dressing to relieve the pain.

**Infections** are rare. We will prescribe antibiotics if we feel they are appropriate. Signs of an infection are increased swelling, fever above 101 degrees F and increased pain. Please call our office if you feel you may have an infection.

**Persistent numbness** is an occasional symptom, usually in the lower lip and chin. There is nothing to be done during the immediate post-operative period. This numbness usually resolves on its own. Please notify us if you have numbness that persists beyond 7-10 days.

If you have any concerns or questions please do not hesitate to call our office at 320-629-2282. If our office is closed, please follow the directions on the message.