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ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY
Diplomate - American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
Diplomate - National Dental Board of Anesthesiology

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General Post Operative Instructions

Your first follow-up appointment has been scheduled on:

Day: M Tu W Th F Date: _____ Time: _____ : _____ a.m. p.m.

We are committed to providing the same quality of care following procedures that began during your initial visit. If you are experiencing problems that do not seem normal, or if you have any questions please call the office (505) 338-9833 for assistance. After Office hours, call (505) 857-3715 and the answering service will contact the doctor.

After office hours, we make every attempt to respond as promptly as possible. Occasionally, your messages do not reach the doctor or we are unable to immediately respond to the call. If you do not hear from the doctor on call within one-half hour, please call back and ask the service to contact the doctor again.

Immediate Post Surgery/First Day/Overview:

- **Numbness:** Your jaw, cheek, tongue & lip may be numb for several hours after surgery. Therefore, avoid biting the numb tissues.
- **Bleeding:** You will leave the office with gauze in your mouth. Replace the gauze every 30 minutes for a 3-4 hour period.
- **Eating:** After the initial bleeding is under control (only slight oozing of blood from the surgical sites) you may drink cool liquids (no carbonated liquids or sucking through a straw) and try some cool or room temperature soft foods. You may advance your diet as tolerated to warm liquids and foods after 6-8 hours.
- **Disturbing the area of surgery:** The first stages of healing are aided by placing tissues at rest. Avoid vigorous chewing, excessive spitting, or aggressive rinsing to avoid delayed healing, bleeding or infection. You may brush the non-surgical areas without concern.
- **Swelling:** Apply an ice pack to your face/jaw over the surgical site for 30 minutes of each hour. Repeat the cycle for the first 24-48 hours. Keep your head elevated for at least 24 hours as well.
- **DO NOT DRIVE AN AUTOMOBILE OR ATTEMPT ANY HAZARDOUS TASKS** for 24 hours following surgery if you have had intravenous sedation, or if you are taking prescription narcotic pain medication.

General Instructions:

- **Regular medications:** do not stop taking required medication prescribed by your physician (for diabetes, high blood pressure, etc) unless directed to do otherwise.

- **Stitches:** Stitches (also known as sutures) are usually placed to control bleeding, aid healing and help prevent food from collecting in the surgical site. The sutures usually dissolve in 3 to 5 days or longer and **most stitches do not have to be removed.**
- **SMOKING:** Smoking of any kind and frequency will slow the healing process and will also contribute to the development of a dry socket. Do not place gauze over the surgical site and smoke, this will only concentrate substances hazardous to healing and worsen the problem.
- Do not take our prescribed medications on an empty stomach.
- **Avoid strenuous activity or aerobic exercising for 4-5 days following surgery.**
- Your other teeth may ache temporarily. This is referred pain and is a temporary condition.
- When a tooth is extracted there will be a bone socket (hole). This cavity may remain open and will gradually fill in with new tissue over the course of several weeks.

Instructions

Bleeding

- Expect bleeding or **OOZING** from the surgical site. This bleeding may continue for up to two days after surgery. For 30 minute increments, following surgery, keep firm pressure on the area by continuously biting on gauze sponges placed in your mouth for a 3 to 4 hour period. If bleeding persists, continue pressure on a fresh sponge for additional 30 to 60 minute intervals. Alternatively, biting on a moist tea bag (not herbal tea) may help control persistent oozing from the surgical site. Tea has an ingredient that promotes blood clotting. If active bleeding should recur at any time, carefully rinse your mouth with cold water and apply a fresh gauze sponge or tea bag to the bleeding site. This may need to be repeated several times at 30-60 minute intervals until the bleeding is under control. Should active bleeding persist, please call the office.
- **Bruising** marks may appear on the skin of the face during the first few days after surgery. Moist heat application after 48 hours will help relieve this condition.

Swelling

- Rest and sleep with your head slightly elevated for 2-3 days after surgery to help reduce swelling.
- Swelling related to the surgical procedure will peak in intensity three to five days post operatively and should subside over the subsequent days. Swelling can be minimized by placing an ice pack on the sides of your face for thirty minutes every hour during the first 24-48 hours following the surgery. Anti-inflammatory pain medications, such as Motrin or Advil also help decrease swelling.
- Any swelling, soreness, or stiffness in the jaw muscles after the first 48 hours can be best relieved by applying a warm moist towel to the affected side(s) of the face in the same manner as you used the ice 6 to 10 times daily. Moist heat should be used once you discontinue the ice and continued for several days after the surgery.

Diet

- **Fluid intake:** It is important to aggressively drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. **Avoid drinking carbonated beverages for at least 5 days after surgery** to prevent prolonged bleeding and to lessen the chance of a dry socket. Electrolyte & sport drinks or water are good examples.
- **Good nutrition** must be maintained following oral surgery even if mouth soreness and jaw stiffness are present.
- **Avoid using a straw for 5 days** as it may cause the blood clot to dislodge and delay healing and result in a dry socket. Drink from a glass or cup.
- **Food selection** is largely a matter of your choice, we suggest the following:
 - **First day Immediately after surgery:** Drink plenty of liquids (except carbonated beverages). Soft, cool or room temperature foods that require little or no chewing are most easily tolerated at this time. A nutritious diet is necessary to promote healing and a speedy recovery. Since you will be taking medication, it is important to remember that eating can prevent nausea sometimes associated with certain medications. You may advance to warm foods after 6 to 8 hours.
 - Suggested food choices: Yogurt, pudding, Jell-O[®], milkshakes, ice cream, instant breakfast, applesauce, Ensure[®], baby food and blenderized foods, fish, chicken, soups, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, and cooked vegetables can be added to your diet as your comfort indicates. Multi vitamins are certainly OK.
 - There is no reason to avoid your favorite foods if you are comfortable while eating them. **Advance to your regular diet as quickly as you are able.**

Mouth Care

- On the morning after your surgery, rinse your mouth gently with a solution made by adding $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt to a 6 to 8 oz glass of warm water. Repeat 3 to 4 times a day until remaining soreness subsides approximately one week. Please do not use a syringe or Water Pick near the surgical sites during the first week as it can dislodge the blood clot.
- Avoid disturbing the surgical site with your tongue, aggressive tooth brushing or vigorous rinsing. Resume brushing any remaining teeth using your regular oral hygiene within 24 hours. To minimize inflammation and risk of infection, we encourage brushing near the area of surgery only after 24 hours. You may brush the surgical site with a soft toothbrush after 24 hours.

What is a dry socket?

- Dry sockets continue to be the most common problem people experience following tooth extraction. They arise due to premature loss of the protective blood clot in the empty tooth socket and affect approximately five to ten percent of patients. This occurs with greater frequency in people who smoke, exercise, women who take birth control pills, and use of a straw or carbonated beverages prior to the 5th post operative day. While both jaws can be affected, they usually occur in the lower jaw 3 to 5 days post operatively. Dry socket pain is intense, continuous and centered in the jaw where the tooth/teeth were removed. The pain often radiates to the ear, chin and neck with associated headaches. It may begin at any time between 3 to 5 days after extraction and pain medication usually

does not alleviate the pain. Treatment involves placing a medicated dressing in the “empty” tooth socket. This will help decrease the pain for 24-48 hours and protect the socket from food particles. The medicated dressing may need to be replaced every 2 to 3 days for a five to seven day period. Some dressings dissolve on their own. The dressing does not aid in healing of the tooth socket. The only reason to place a dressing is to relieve pain. If pain medication is controlling pain, the socket will heal without treatment.

Medication Instructions:

- **Antibiotic:** If you were given an antibiotic, take as prescribed. The frequency varies with the type of antibiotic. It is important to take the antibiotics until all of the pills are gone. Failure to do so may increase the chance of infection.
 - Yogurt with active cultures, acidophilus, or probiotics may be taken while on antibiotics to help prevent diarrhea and yeast infections.
 - **Antibiotics can sometimes render birth control pills ineffective!!** Please use a substitute method of contraception for the remainder of your current menstrual cycle while continuing to take the remaining birth control pills even after the completion of your antibiotic.
- **Pain Medication:**
 1. Take the **400mg, 600mg or 800mg Ibuprofen (Motrin)** four times a day often along with the antibiotic (at breakfast, lunch, dinner and bedtime with food) for the first three days. Then every 6-8 hours **only** if needed for pain thereafter.
 - The Ibuprofen will not make you sleepy, drowsy or disturb your hand eye coordination therefore it can be taken while driving, working or at school, etc.
 - Do not take more than 3200mg in a 24 hour period.
 2. **Hydrocodone (Lortab or Vicodin) Oxycodone (Percocet):** Take one to two tablets every 4 to 6 hours **only** as needed for pain. Please avoid taking this medication if possible.
 - This medication can be taken with the other medications.
 - These narcotics will make you **sleepy** and **drowsy** for at least 6 hours after taken. Therefore, do not operate a vehicle, or work while under the influence of this medication.
 - Narcotics will occasionally cause **nausea** and **vomiting**. The incidence of nausea is reduced if the medication is taken with food. Dairy products aggravate nausea.
 - If the nausea persists, discontinue the narcotic and rely on the Ibuprofen for pain control. If you are still uncomfortable while taking the Ibuprofen and have persistent pain and/or nausea please call the office at 338-9833. If it is after hours please follow the voice mail instructions.
 - Please do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking narcotic pain medication.
- Faithful compliance with these instructions will add to your comfort and hasten your recovery. Be sure to follow these instructions carefully. Only in this way will you avoid the complications which lead to unnecessary discomfort and delayed recovery. Should any undue reaction or complications arise, notify the office immediately.

A Professional association devoted to the practice of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery