



Centers for Periodontal Specialty Care & Dental Implants
New City, NY Middletown, NY Poughkeepsie, NY

Post-operative Instructions After Oral Surgery

Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if the instructions are followed carefully.

BLEEDING:

After tooth extraction/oral surgery, it is important for a blood clot to form to stop the bleeding and begin the healing process. That is why we asked you to bite on a gauze pad for 30-45 minutes after the appointment. If the bleeding or oozing still persists, place another gauze pad and bite firmly for another 30 minutes. You may have to do this several times. After the blood clot forms, it is important not to disturb or dislodge the clot as it aids in healing. Do not rinse vigorously, suck on straws, smoke, drink alcohol, or brush teeth next to the extraction site for 72 hours. These activities will dislodge and dissolve the clot and retard the healing process. Limit vigorous activity for the next 24 hours, as this will increase blood pressure and may cause more bleeding from the extraction/surgical site.

A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Excessive bleeding may be controlled by wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area, and biting firmly for 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary. If bleeding continues, bite on a moist and squeeze dried tea bag for 60 minutes, repeat as necessary. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting blood vessels. If bleeding does not subside, call for further instructions.

SWELLING:

The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and sides of face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days post-operatively. However, the swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Two baggies filled with ice, or ice packs, should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed (10 minutes on and 10 minutes off). After 24 hours, ice has no beneficial effect. Swelling or jaw stiffness may persist for several days and this is no cause for alarm. This is a normal reaction to surgery. 36 hours following surgery, the application of moist heat to the side of the face is beneficial in reducing the swelling (10 minutes on and 10 minutes off). The pain and

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swelling should subside more and more each day following surgery. If your post-operative pain or swelling worsens or unusual symptoms occur, call our office for instructions.

When the swelling settles down and then swells up again, this may mean that you have an infection and you should call our office immediately upon notice of this re-swelling occurrence.

PAIN:

Most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. If it is necessary, you will be provided with a prescription for medication. This can be filled at any drug store and should be used as directed. Pain may be expected soon after surgery and will reach its maximum during the first few hours. For moderate pain, take Advil 200mg (over the counter) every 4-6 hours or Aleve (Naproxen Sodium) 225mg, two pills every 8-12 hours [Do not exceed 2400mg (12 tablets) in a 24 hour period!], or Tylenol (extra strength/regular) may be taken every 3-4 hours (Do not exceed 4000mg (8 tablets) in a 24 hour period!).

You may have been given a prescription for a stronger pain reliever. The narcotic pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages.

Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside more and more every day. If pain persists, it may require attention and you should call our office.

DIET:

Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Temperature food does not matter but avoid extremely hot foods. Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc. that may get lodged in the socket areas. It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort, and heal faster. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits as much as possible and follow instructions from your physician regarding your insulin schedule.

ORAL HYGIENE:

Keeping the mouth clean is essential. Today, teeth may be brushed and flossed gently. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing of all areas, but please make every effort to clean the teeth within the bounds of comfort. Avoid brushing the surgical area for approximately one week.

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DISCOLORATION:

In some cases, discoloration of the skin follows swelling. The development of black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is a normal post-operative occurrence, which may occur 2-3 days post-operatively. Moist heat applied to the area may speed up the removal of the discoloration.

ANTIBIOTICS:

If you have been placed on antibiotics, take the tablets or liquid as directed. Antibiotics will be given to help prevent infection. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or other unfavorable reactions. Call the office if you have any questions.

NAUSEA AND VOMITING:

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour, including the prescribed medicine. Vomiting/nausea is often increased by taking the pain medication. You then sip on Coke, tea, or Ginger Ale. You should sip slowly over a 15 minute period. When the nausea subsides, you can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine, but stop the narcotic pain medication. Remember not to take pain medication without something in your stomach.

SUTURES:

Sutures are placed in the area to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help healing. They will dissolve approximately one week after surgery and do not need to be removed. Sometimes they become dislodged, this is no cause for alarm. Just remove the suture from your mouth and discard it.

DRY SOCKET:

There will be a cavity where the tooth was removed. The cavity will gradually, over the next month, fill in with new tissue. A dry socket is when the blood clot dissolves pre-maturely from the tooth socket. Symptoms of persistent pain and throbbing at the surgical site, and even pain to the ear, may occur 2-3 days following surgery. **The bone graft is not responsible for the pain and does not need to be removed.** Pain should not increase with time. Call the office if this occurs.

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BONE GRAFT MATERIAL:

Do not be concerned if you notice any spongy or gritty material in your mouth after tooth removal; this does not compromise successful healing!

TASTE AND ODOR:

After the surgery, a bad taste or odor may occur. This is usually secondary to a lack of appropriate cleaning in the area. A commercial mouthwash may be used.

POST-OPERATIVE CARE AFTER SINUS GRAFT SURGERY:

You will be having a Sinus Lift if the area in the upper jaw that you are to have implant(s) currently has insufficient bone because of an enlarged sinus. This procedure will augment the deficient area in the maxillary sinus.

1. **DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES BLOW YOUR NOSE FOR THE NEXT FOUR WEEKS.** This may be longer if indicated. You may sniff all you like, but **NO BLOWING.**
2. **Try not to sneeze. If you need to sneeze, do NOT squeeze your nose and keep your mouth open!!!**
3. Nosebleeds are normal and may occur for several days following surgery. Treat by leaning your head back and utilize direct pressure.
4. Some drainage from the nose and mouth are normal- just wipe away.
5. Do not be alarmed by the presence of small granules.
6. Severe cheek swelling is also normal following this procedure. If the eyes swell shut, please call our office immediately.
7. You may feel congested as part of the post-surgical symptoms. For sinus decongestion, you may use over the counter Actifed, Sudafed, or Claritin D for one week and follow the instructions on the box. **If you have high blood pressure, please check with your medical doctor before taking these medications.**
8. The area of the graft placement will feel full and tight. This is normal. Do not stretch your lip daily to inspect the area. This can cause wound breakdown.
9. Elevate your head (sleep with an extra pillow) to reduce bleeding and swelling.
10. Limit activity for three weeks after surgery. No physical strenuous activity. No heavy lifting.
11. Do not bend over to pick up items. When you bend over, gravity may move the bone material that was placed in your sinus as well as blood to an area where there is communication with the

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- nose. This may cause your nose to bleed or you may find white particulate matter coming out of your nose. Bleeding from the nose may happen anyway and is not a cause for concern unless it persists for an extended period of time.
12. Do not drink through a straw. Drinking through a straw creates pressure in your mouth and may disturb the sinus area's surgical site.
 13. Do not spit, even after rinsing your mouth. Spitting out mouth rinses vigorously will cause pressure and again, may disturb the sinus area's surgical site. By gently letting the water flow out of your mouth without a forceful evacuation, the pressure will be minimized.
 14. Do not go on an airplane for at least two weeks after the surgical procedure. High altitudes will create pressure that will be experienced in the mouth and sinuses and can cause damage to the surgical site.
 15. Do not play musical instruments that require blowing with your mouth for at least six weeks after the surgery. This will cause pressure and may cause damage to the surgical site.

TEMPORARY PROSTHESIS:

If you have a temporary flipper denture to wear, do not place it in until the numbness in the area is gone. When it is placed, it should not touch your gums in the area of the surgery. If it does, this can cause ulceration of the wound edges and breakdown of the suture margins. If you have questions about the fit of your flipper denture, do not wear it until our doctors or your referring dentist can see you.

The removable denture should not be worn at night and should be worn as little as possible.

OTHER ISSUES:

If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs, there is no cause for alarm. This is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb, you could bite it and not feel the sensation, so be careful. Call Dr. Gordon or Dr. Maltz if you have any questions.

Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temperature persists, notify the office. Tylenol or Ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.

You should be careful going from a lying down position to standing. Taking pain medications can make you dizzy. You can feel lightheaded when you stand up suddenly. Before standing up, you should sit for one minute and then get up.

Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots; they are bony walls which supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not,

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they can be removed by Drs. Gordon or Maltz. Occasionally, small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the first week or two after surgery.

If the corners of your mouth stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with ointments such as Vaseline.

Sore throats and pain when swallowing are not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can become painful. This will subside in 2-3 days.

Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative event which will resolve in time.

Smoking should be discontinued for at least three days, since it is very detrimental to healing and increases the risk of surgical failure.

If you are involved in regular exercise, be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced.

Exercise may weaken you. If you get lightheaded, stop exercising.

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