



Postoperative Information & Instructions

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Postoperative Information and Instructions

The following suggestions and reminders will be beneficial to your postoperative progress and will aid considerably in promoting comfortable healing. Please read the instructions carefully and follow the recommendations.

Surgical Dressing: The areas of surgery have been covered with a dressing or surgical pack which will harden within the next hour. The dressing provides a protective covering and can withstand moderate stresses of light chewing and tooth brushing. It should remain in place until your next appointment when it will be removed or replaced. Should the dressing become loose or dislodged, do not become alarmed. The gum tissue will heal even if some or all of the pack comes out. Call the office if you have bleeding or pain.

Medications: Start taking the pain medication within the next hour after surgery and take the prescribed dosage as directed if you have discomfort. After the first day, take the pain medication as needed or discontinue it and alternate Tylenol and Ibuprofen every 2-3 hours if you are not allergic to either.

- If other medications, such as antibiotics, vitamins or sedatives are prescribed, take them as directed on the bottle. Stop taking them if any adverse reactions (nausea, itching, and redness) occur.
- **Important:** Driving or operating dangerous equipment while taking pain medication can be very dangerous. Do not consume alcohol after being sedated or while taking pain medications.

Bleeding: A slight amount of oozing is not uncommon for the first 12 hours. You can usually control the slight amount of bleeding by:

- Applying an ice bag to face and holding chips of ice in your mouth.
- Applying firm pressure with clean, wet gauze to the edge of the pack at the area of bleeding. Hold this for 10-20 minutes.
- If gingival grafting was done, apply pressure on the outside of the lip or cheek—not directly on the graft.
- Keep your head elevated with at least two pillows the night of surgery. *If dark red bleeding or blood clots develop, please call the office.*

Swelling: Some swelling is to be expected following periodontal surgery. The amount varies with the extent of the surgery. Apply ice packs to the face and neck, alternating the pack on and off every 10 minutes for the first 4 hours. This will help control swelling and discomfort. Swelling should be greatest at the second or third day and start to subside about the fourth day. After the first 24 hours, apply heat to the area of swelling and use warm salt water rinses. Add ½ teaspoon of salt to an 8 ounce glass of warm water

and use every three to four hours. Ice and heat are not needed for all surgery, only if you're having pain, bleeding, or swelling.

Fever: A slight elevation in temperature chills and weakness may be experienced during the first 24 hours. This should not be concern for alarm. The temperature elevation should not be over one or two degrees. *If you have excessive rise in temperature, notify the office.*

Activities: Rest for the first 24 hours and avoid exertion. After 24 hours, resume normal activities, unless bleeding or throbbing occurs.

Care of Mouth:

- Use the antibacterial mouthwash twice daily to reduce bacterial growth, discomfort and the possibility of infection. You should continue this for one month in most surgical cases.
- Soften your tooth brush by placing it under hot water, and then gently brush the teeth and not the dressing.
- Do not use the Water Pik while the dressing is in place.
- Be very careful if you use an electric toothbrush.

Discoloration: Discoloration of the skin is sometimes seen following periodontal surgery. Slight bleeding into the tissues during surgery causes the discoloration and only time will eliminate it—usually a week to ten days. Some staining of the teeth may occur with the use of the mouthwash but will be removed by routine cleaning.

Diet: Maintaining a nutritious diet during the week of healing is most important. The patient who maintains a good diet of soft foods generally feels better, has less discomfort and heals faster. Foods containing tomatoes, onions, peppers or spices of any kind will be irritating and should be avoided. Fruit juices may cause burning sensations unless taken through a straw. During the first 24 hours, drink lots of fluids.

Breakfast: Milk, hot chocolate, tea, coffee, fresh orange juice, stewed fruits, prunes or similar fruits should be mashed or sieved; cooked cereals-oatmeal, cream of wheat, grits with butter and cream of rice; eggs-soft boiled/ scrambled, poached or soft toast, milk toast.

Lunch and Dinner: Home cooked broth, bouillon, soups, ground beef (soft boiled and broken in small pieces and mixed with whipped potatoes), baked or broiled fish or fried fish with out the crust, broiled or finely chopped stewed chicken, stew, chicken noodles or dumplings, Irish potatoes (baked, broiled, or whipped), asparagus, English peas, carrots, lima beans, string beans (all mashed), cottage cheese, cream cheese, cheese soufflé, baked apples, cold apple sauce, fresh vegetable juices (may be obtained at health food stores), cooked meat and vegetable juices, ice cream and milk shakes.
Bread should be softened with vegetable juice or milk. A blender may be used to liquefy foods.

Supplements: Carnation Instant Breakfast may be used three or four times daily- either added to meals or as an in between meal snack. Diet supplements may also be obtained at your drug store. Cottage cheese or yogurt is good for added nutrition. If vitamins have been prescribes, take as directed.

Remember: You may eat any soft foods that do not irritate. You may chew if it is not too uncomfortable to do so. You will probably lose parts of the dressing around the teeth as your ability to chew improves. If there are any questions, don't hesitate to call us.

Important: A hungry person becomes irritable and nervous. It has been scientifically proven that a patient in this state is more susceptible to pain. The importance of a good diet cannot be over stressed, especially following surgery.

Feel free to call us any time; we want you to be as comfortable as possible during your healing period (334) 277-2100 (office).