

CARE OF THE MOUTH FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY AND ANESTHESIA

We expect that you should do well after your surgical care. Most people do very well and have little or no problems. On this sheet, we try to address some of the most common concerns brought to our attention. If you do have any questions for us, we are here for you. Please do not hesitate to call.

GAUZE: Folded gauze square is commonly placed over the surgical site and should be held firmly over the site with moderate bite pressure. This should be continued for one hour and then gently removed. This should be done while you are in a well lit area (your bathroom in front of the mirror). After the gauze is removed, you should not see blood actively pooling up in the socket and continuously flowing out of the site. If no active bleeding is seen, there is no need to place anymore gauze in the area. You have formed a blood clot. If there is active bleeding, then you can repeat gauze pressure or use a moistened, caffeinated tea bag for pressure. A small amount of blood mixed in your saliva is normal. We call this normal oozing. This may persist for one to two weeks, gradually becoming less and less and does not require gauze to be placed over the socket.

THE HEALING CLOT: During the first few minutes after surgery, a clot forms at the surgical site. The clot is living tissue that depends on the surrounding tissue and bone for its blood supply. During the first 24 hours, the clot undergoes a change where it becomes fixed in place and provides the framework for proper healing. Avoid activities that will dislodge the clot from the sites (**NO sucking on straws, smoking, picking at socket or stitches, brushing in the socket, rinsing too vigorously, or spitting**). Small sharp bone fragments may work their way through the gums during the healing process. These are not roots. If they cause any problems, return to our office for simple removal.

DO NOT RINSE YOUR MOUTH OUT TODAY: Sitting and rinsing causes increased bleeding. Do not spit; this could dislodge the healing clot. Do not touch the surgical site with fingers, toothpicks or play with it with your tongue. Irritation, bleeding, or infection can result. Gentle rinsing at the surgical sites can be done starting the day after your surgery. Use ¼ teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water for this rinsing. After 1 week, you can begin progressing back to your regular oral hygiene at the surgical sites and can use the plastic irrigating syringe after each meal as instructed.

NO SMOKING AFTER SURGERY: Cigarette smoke contains carbon monoxide and nicotine which are both toxic to the healing tissues. Smoking even one cigarette can harm the healing process and lead to healing complications. Give yourself this week off from smoking to allow for healing, you may find it will be a first step in kicking the habit.

DISCOMFORT: A medication for discomfort is usually prescribed. Use it as directed. Alcoholic beverages should not be used while taking narcotic pain medications. Also, appropriate caution should be taken to avoid activities that require alertness while

on pain medications. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) such as Aleve or Advil work at the surgical sites to decrease swelling and inflammation and reduce discomfort. These can be used along with the prescribed pain medications. Watch for stomach upset with these medications. You should not use NSAIDS if you are taking blood thinning medications. If after 3 to 4 days slow improvement in discomfort does not occur or if pain increases, this can be a sign of complications our office should be notified.

SWELLING: Swelling is a common reaction to surgery, this is normal. Taking Aleve or Advil will do the most to decrease swelling and inflammation at the sites. Many people like to use an ice bag or ice wrapped in a towel to apply to the face on the side of the extraction. Others like to prepare several frozen wash cloths the night before their surgery by securing the moistened washcloth to an empty soda can with a rubber band and placed in the freezer. The use of frozen vegetables (peas or corn kernels) works well when wrapped in a paper towel. These methods of reducing swelling should be started as soon as you return home by placing it on for 15 minutes and off for 15 minutes for the first 24 hours. You do not need to wake up throughout the night to use the ice packs, just start again in the morning after you wake up.

DIET: Proper dietary intake is important for good healing. Remain on a liquid diet the day of and the day after your surgery. Avoid hot liquids until the day after your surgery as hot temperatures can sometimes dissolve the healing clot. You can progress to a normal diet on the third day after your surgery however, you can continue with a liquid diet as necessary for comfort. Diet supplements (Carnation Instant Breakfast, Ensure, Boost etc.) are available through your pharmacy or grocery stores may be helpful. Hard foods or foods with husks such as nuts and popcorn should be avoided as they can become stuck in the surgical site and cause discomfort.

NAUSEA: It is important to take in some nourishment after anesthesia as this will help to settle an upset stomach. If you have nausea, start with some liquid such as 7-Up or Gatorade. Sometimes starting with small sips of water can help. Do not try to force large volumes as this may complicate your nausea. Nausea is usually self limiting. Sometimes if nausea continues, the use of over-the-counter medications such as Emetrol or Bonine can be tried. If the nausea continues after these medications, our office should be notified and a prescription medication can be considered.

HYGIENE: When should I start brushing again? Do not brush, floss or rinse after your surgery that day. Brushing and flossing should be avoided in the surgical site for one week. Brushing with toothpaste and gentle rinsing with water after each meal should be started the day after your surgery. Use of a medicated mouth rinse, if prescribed, can be resumed the day after your surgery gently in the morning and at bedtime as directed.

EMERGENCY: Contact Dr. Oltean 1-630-390-5725