

Instructions Following Periodontal Surgery

The following information has been prepared to answer questions you may have about how to take care of your mouth following surgery.

I. Dressing

- A. A periodontal dressing is now in place in your mouth to protect the treated area and keep it comfortable. In most cases, the dressing is left in the mouth for a period of one to two weeks.
- B. Do not eat or drink anything warm for the next 3-5 hours. This will allow the dressing to set and also prevent you from burning your mouth.
- C. After the dressing has hardened, you may eat and drink warm foods and liquids, but you should avoid all chewing on the side treated.
- D. If the dressing becomes dislodged or if pieces break off before your next appointment there is no need for replacement. This is common.

II. Discomfort

- A. Some discomfort is normal after surgery. It can be controlled by taking the pain pills that you have been prescribed.
- B. Take your pills with a whole glass of water and eat a small amount of food prior to taking medication.
- C. Do not drive or drink alcohol if you are taking prescription pain pills containing a narcotic.
- D. If pain persists or gets excessive, please call the office immediately.

III. Bleeding

- A. Some blood will ooze from the area of surgery. This is normal. You may find a blood stain on your pillow in the morning.
- B. If there is excessive bleeding, take a piece of sterile gauze and form it into a "U" shape and apply it to both sides of the surgically treated area, holding it under gentle pressure without releasing for 20 minutes. If bleeding does not stop in 20 minutes, please call immediately.

IV. Swelling

- A. Swelling after surgery is a normal body reaction. It reaches its maximum about 48 hours after surgery and usually lasts 4-6 days.
 - B. On the day of surgery an ice pack should be used over the treated area to reduce the amount of swelling which may occur. You should alternate the pack; 30 minutes on and then 30 minutes off for up to 12 hours after surgery.
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V. Bruising and Stiffness

- A. You may experience some mild bruising in the area treated. This is a normal response in some people and should not be a cause for alarm.
- B. After surgery, you may experience jaw muscle stiffness and limited opening of your mouth. This is normal and will improve in 5 to 10 days. Application of moist heat may help.

VI. Oral Hygiene

- A. Do not rinse your mouth for the first 8 hours after surgery.
- B. After that, rinse gently with any commercial mouth rinse that is diluted in half with water. Do not rinse vigorously as this may dislodge the dressing. Do not spit because this promotes bleeding.
- C. Brush your teeth as usual, but avoid the area of surgery and dressing.
- D. Do not smoke after surgery because this may promote bleeding and interfere with healing.

VII. Rest

- A. Avoid strenuous activity for 48-72 hours after your surgery.

VIII. Diet

- A. It is important to drink a large volume of fluids. Do not drink through a straw because this may promote bleeding.
- B. You may eat normal regular meals after the dressing has set (3-5 hours). Room temperature soft foods may be the most comfortable for the first day. Be sure to chew on the opposite side of the surgically treated area.
- C. Avoid foods with small seeds, as well as popcorn and nuts.

IX. Call the office if:

- A. You experience excessive discomfort that you cannot control with your pain pills.
- B. You have bleeding that you cannot control by gentle pressure with gauze.
- C. You have increased swelling after the third day following surgery.
- D. You feel that you have a fever.
- E. You have any questions at all!

If other problems or questions arise, do not hesitate to call the office. We are available 24 hours a day.

