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Periodontics and Dental Implants, Exclusively

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## INSTRUCTIONS TO PATIENT FOLLOWING PERIODONTAL SURGERY

Optimal healing following periodontal surgery is dependent on proper post-operative care. It is very important to follow these instructions.

### **COMFORT**

You may be given a narcotic prescription (e.g. Vicodin, Tylenol #3), in addition to the use of a non-narcotic pain medication (Ibuprofen or Tylenol). Take your pain medication as directed following completion of the surgery. **DO NOT WAIT** for the discomfort to become severe before taking the medication. **NEVER** take pain medication on an empty stomach. **DO NOT** attempt to drive or work with dangerous machinery while taking pain medication. If this is still inadequate call the doctor for instructions.

### **ANTIBIOTICS**

If antibiotics were prescribed, they should not be taken at the same time as the pain medication to prevent nausea from occurring. It is very important to take the antibiotics until they are all finished, as directed on the bottle. If you experience any side effects such as itching or redness, please discontinue the medication and contact the office. *For women: If antibiotics are prescribed, they may interfere with the efficacy of birth control pills and an alternative method of birth control should be utilized for the duration of the antibiotic usage and throughout the present menstrual cycle.*

### **SWELLING**

Some swelling usually will occur. If this happens, it will be greatest the first 48 to 72 hours following surgery. To minimize swelling, use ice packs, 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off the area(s) of the face corresponding to the surgical site (do not place ice packs directly on skin). It is important that this be done for the first day. After 24-48 hours, switch to moist heat.

### **BLEEDING**

Slight seepage from the surgical site is expected for the first 12 hours. Activity can often stimulate some degree of bleeding. Please do not rinse or spit after surgery as this would promote bleeding. If there is excessive bleeding, identify the problem area and apply firm, continuous pressure with gauze, a moist tea bag, or moist wash towel. Keep your head elevated for at least 15 minutes before re-examining the area. Do not try to stop the bleeding by rinsing. If bleeding persists, please call the office.

### **ACTIVITY**

Try to rest and keep talking to a minimum, avoiding strenuous activity or exercise for at least 3 days after the procedure. Be kind to yourself and allow your body to heal.

### **SURGICAL DRESSING**

Often a surgical cement is placed to hold, protect, and comfort the surgical area. This dressing requires about 2 hours to "set". During this time, avoid talking, smoking, eating, or drinking hot fluids. Do not rub the area or play with the dressing with your tongue. **LOSS OF DRESSING:** Occasionally, small pieces of dressing break off. If the uncovered area is small and causing no discomfort, it is safe to wait until your next appointment. If a large piece breaks off, or the whole dressing feels loose, call the office or remove it. If the dressing falls off, please leave it off. The area must remain stable.

## **SUTURES**

It is common for sutures to feel as though they are coming out. If part of a suture does start to come out, please do not pull it out. You may cut the piece shorter if needed.

## **ORAL HYGIENE**

The day after surgery, begin gentle rinsing twice a day with the prescribed rinse. Gentle, warm, salt water rinses are also strongly recommended. Brush and floss the teeth not involved in the surgery starting the day after the procedure. Note: Please discontinue the use of any mechanical hygiene aid (including brushing, flossing) for 2 weeks post-surgically at the surgical area, or until told it is safe to do so.

## **DIET**

The importance of a nutritious diet cannot be over-stressed during this healing period. A patient who eats good soft foods feels better, remains comfortable and heals faster. A hungry person becomes irritable and nervous. It has been scientifically shown that a person in this state is more susceptible to pain.

Avoid eating on the treated side, if possible. A softer diet is recommended during the first two days. Do not eat hard foods or anything too hot for the first two days. Milk shakes, Instant Breakfast, Ensure, fruit juices and warm soups are recommended for the initial meals.

Soft foods can be eaten until you feel ready to go back to your regular diet. The following require little pressure to chew and provide necessary nutrients: eggs, cottage cheese, ground meat, bananas, cooked fish, cereals and whole wheat bread. **Vitamin C** aid healing, therefore fresh orange juice and/or tomato juice is excellent. You should continue your usual vitamin supplements. Please refrain from consuming alcohol during the first weeks after surgery. Please do not drink from a straw for at least one week post-surgically.

## **SMOKING**

Smoking compromises healing. It is therefore recommended that you refrain from smoking for the next three weeks to promote excellent healing. This is especially true if a bone graft has been performed.

## **FEVER**

A slight fever or chills may occur. It is of no consequence unless it persists more than 24 hours. If a fever persists more than 24 hours or if the fever is above 102°, please contact our office. This is a rare occurrence and should not be expected.

## **ANESTHETICS**

The length of time you experience numbness varies, depending on the type and amount of anesthetic you've received and the areas that was anesthetized. While your mouth is numb, you'll want to be careful not to bite your cheek, lip or tongue. The numbness should subside within a few hours. If it doesn't, contact our office.

## **FUTURE APPOINTMENTS**

You will be seen in approximately one week to have the sutures removed. Additional appointments will be given to you at that time. They should be kept as scheduled.

We find that most patients are somewhat apprehensive about their upcoming surgical appointment. Nearly everyone, however, finds the experience much easier than they had imagined. We want you to know that our entire office staff is committed to making your experience as easy and pleasant as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact us at 940-384-7374.