

## **ORAL SURGERY: Postoperative Instructions**

### **IMMEDIATE CARE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Bite hard on the gauze pad that is over the extraction area for at least 2 hours.
2. Take a pain pill in 2 hours.
3. Place ice next to the surgical site area as soon as possible.
4. Begin drinking when the numbness wears off.
5. Do not smoke or chew tobacco for 48 hours.
6. Read the POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS sheet thoroughly.

To minimize discomfort following surgery, it is necessary that you follow these instructions.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER TREATMENT**

1. Keep the protective gauze pack in position with heavy biting pressure for at least 45 minutes after surgery or until bleeding has stopped. Try to avoid opening your bite. This pack serves several useful purposes, and your long-range postoperative course will be more comfortable and shortened appreciably if the pack remains undisturbed as directed.

2. **Pain.** 600mg of Ibuprofen every 6 hours seems to work best for relieving pain for most people. It is recommended that one of your prescription tablets (in addition to the ibuprofen) be taken approximately two hours after surgery, with a drink of water. Thereafter, take one only as needed (at least 3 to 4 hour intervals, or according to your individual instructions.) To allow a good night's sleep the first night after surgery, it is helpful to set your alarm clock to take a pain pill every 3.5 hours throughout the night. Although these medications are desirable to control pain, excess should be avoided since many patients have a low tolerance for any "pain control drugs," and excess may result in nausea. To increase tolerance for drugs, it is helpful if the patient remains inactive or, better still, goes to bed during the period of discomfort. One should not drive while taking medication for pain. In most cases, prescription medication is only necessary for the first 24-36 hours. Beyond that, continue Ibuprofen or Tylenol for at least 3-4 days to relieve any discomfort. The sooner you begin non-prescription medication, the sooner you will recover.

3. **Bleeding** is to be expected in variable amounts for several hours and oozing may continue throughout the night. This is normal and should not be cause for alarm. Saliva may be pink for 2-3 days. Control of this normal process is best affected by keeping the gauze sponges where they have been placed. If the bleeding seems to be excessive, there are several things to do. First, remove any superficial blood by thoroughly rinsing the mouth one time with cold water. Then place a tightly folded piece of clean gauze over the bleeding area, using enough gauze to apply firm pressure to the tissues when jaws are closed. Maintain pressure with the gauze for a full 30 minutes. Remain quiet and keep the head elevated. If this does not control the bleeding, wrap a moist black tea bag in gauze, place this over the socket and bite firmly. There will also be an increase in the amount of saliva as the anesthetic agents wear off one to three hours after surgery. This is also normal and should not be cause for alarm. Bleeding plus saliva, therefore, does cause a noticeable increase in the total volume of secretions. Hemorrhage (bright red bleeding that wells up rapidly from the socket) rarely occurs. But should this be a problem, please call.

4. **Swelling** may be expected in variable amounts for one to three days after surgery. MORE swelling may occur on the **second or third** day after surgery than on the first day. This is normal. It should decrease within a day. To minimize swelling, place an ice pack on the outside of the cheek in the area of the surgery. Use the ice pack intermittently (20 minutes on; 20 minutes off) for the first 24 hours after surgery. Hot packs should be used after 48 hours, such as a hot wash cloth, hot water bottle or a heating pad on low (20 minutes on/20 minutes off.)

5. **Nourishment** should not be neglected. During the day of surgery, liquids such as carbonated beverages, ice tea, milk shakes, instant breakfast, jello, etc., are recommended. Colder foods are best on the day of surgery. If sponges are in proper position in the cheek area, their presence should not interfere with drinking fluids. After the packs are removed, soft solid foods may be taken if desired (egg, cereal, etc.) Do not use a straw for drinking for 2 days. Drink enough water the first two days to urinate every 2-3 hours (8-10 eight oz. glasses a day.)

6. If **nausea** is a problem, drink using small sips of clear liquids or carbonated beverages. Sipping frequently is better than taking large, single gulps.

Over-the-counter analgesics usually alleviate the discomfort. We usually recommend **600 mg Ibuprofen every 6 hours for the first two days**. If discomfort continues, or if you have severe pain, call us at **(303) 440-4777**.