

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Your next commitment is:

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Day	Date	Time
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Now that your oral surgery is completed, please follow these procedures to make yourself more comfortable, promote healing, and help prevent any possible complications.

**Right now:** Make sure the gauze packing remains in place by biting down firmly for 1 hour, allowing time for a clot to form at the extraction or surgical site. Replace with fresh gauze as needed until the bleeding has subsided. Remove the gauze when you eat or drink something, then replace with the new gauze. It is normal to have a slight seepage of blood for the initial 24 hour period.

**As soon as you get home:** Approximately 1 ½ hour after the surgery, have something to drink and eat. Approximately 15 minutes later, take the prescribed pain medication before the numbness wears off. Remember to eat 15 minutes before taking each dose of the pain medication, each time you take it.

Prepare an ice bag, or plastic baggie with crushed ice. Wrap a soft dry cloth around it, to prevent skin damage. Apply the ice bag to your cheek or jaw, keeping it on for 20-30 minutes on one side and then alternate to the other side and repeat for 24-48 hours. Keep head slightly elevated and continue cold packs in the morning if oozing continues. On the third day switch to using warm packs instead of cold packs.

**Tonight and tomorrow:** Have a light supper at the usual time, and eat foods that are soft. Examples: soup (lukewarm) dunk your crackers, yogurt, pudding, juices, mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs, pancakes, top ramen, pasta, mac & cheese, cream of wheat, bananas, etc. Don't skip meals.

Beginning tomorrow, rinse your mouth with warm salt water three or four times a day, using ½ to 1 tsp. of salt to dissolve in an 8 ounce glass of warm tap water. This serves to remove food and debris from the surgical area and helps prevent infection. Do not use mouthwash for 3 weeks following surgery, as it is too stringent on the healing tissue.

**Gentle tooth brushing:** (avoiding the surgical site) may also be started tomorrow and continued twice daily with your regular tooth paste and toothbrush. Cleanliness of the mouth is very important to promote healing.

**Swelling:** You will experience some swelling to a greater or lesser degree. This is normal and expected, as the body salts race to the area to bathe the injured tissue. The swelling should peak about 48-72 hours after the surgery. Beginning the third day after surgery, use moist heat to reduce swelling.

**Stiff Jaw:** 3 days after surgery, chew gum at intervals, especially while applying warm moist heat on the jaw. This helps to limber the chewing muscles and the stiffness will gradually subside. Stiffness usually doesn't go away until the 2nd week after the surgery.

### **Suggestions:**

1. Take antibiotics (if prescribed) on a regular bases until all pills are gone. This lessens the chances of secondary infection.
2. Be alert for any allergic reactions to medications (rash, etc.). If a rash occurs, discontinue medicines, and take over the counter Benadryl as directions on the bottle indicate, and call the office.
3. If you should develop nausea, stop forcing fluids or food, and allow your stomach to calm down. Then start out with water, mild tea, clear broth, 7-Up and Gatorade before resuming your regular diet. Be careful not to dehydrate. If vomiting occurs, call the office.
4. If you have continued oozing it can be controlled by a gauze pack, biting pressure, cold packs and time. Bleeding for the first 24 hours is normal.
5. If you have persistent bleeding, do not remove all of the gauze packing each time you change. Leave the original and add to it. It's best not to swallow or spit out blood. Allow the blood to be absorbed in the gauze, or try biting on a moistened tea bag for 20 minutes. This has a coagulating effect. Also, use a cold pack, rest and try to relax.

### **Things to avoid for 3 days:**

- No smoking
- No straws
- No spitting
- No granulated foods (such as popcorn, peanuts and chips)
- No exercise

**Remember:** If for any reason you are worried about the condition of your mouth, or if any unexpected developments should cause concern, please call this office if possible before 5:00 pm (office hours). If you call with an emergency (after office hours), the answering service will alert me, so I can address your concerns.

**We appreciate you coming to us for your oral surgery.**  
Dr. Partridge & Dr. Maxfield • 801-943-8703