

## POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

*Following these directions is the most important thing that you as a patient can do to aid your healing process. Please read them carefully.*

**1. BLEEDING:** After your procedure, you will be biting into a gauze pad that has been placed over the surgical area. Maintain constant pressure over the pad for at least 1 hour. If, after removal, **active** bleeding continues, replace this pad with a fresh, slightly moistened pad and maintain pressure for 1 hour. Change pad when necessary. If bleeding persists, a moistened teabag (non-herbal) may be substituted for gauze. **Do not use gauze after the first day.** Some blood in the saliva for 1-2 days is normal. To prevent dislodging the blood clot: DO NOT spit excessively, rinse your mouth, or use straws on the day of surgery. No smoking for at least 5 days.

**2. DISCOMFORT AND PAIN CONTROL:** Medications have been prescribed to control pain. It is best to take your pain medications before your local anesthetic wears off. Take all pain medication with food. While taking pain medications do not drink alcohol, drive, or operate machinery.

**3. ANTIBIOTICS:** Antibiotics are not always necessary after surgery. If antibiotics have been prescribed, take the medication according to the directions on the label. It is important to finish antibiotics no matter how well you may feel. If you develop hives, a rash, or itching, stop all medications and call the office immediately.

**4. SWELLING AND DISCOLORATION:** Swelling normally increases for 2-3 days after surgery and then goes away gradually. Keep the head elevated (resting on 2 pillows) for 1-2 days after surgery. Ice packs used for the first 1-2 days will help reduce swelling. DO NOT apply heat to the face unless instructed by our office. Some bruising on your face and /or neck may occur. Discoloration will range from blue to yellowish green and may remain for one week.

**5. DIET:** Good nutrition and fluid intake are important after surgery. The day of surgery a liquid or soft diet is suggested. (Milk shakes, instant breakfast, soups, yogurts, scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, etc.) Drink plenty of liquids (juice, tea, Gatorade etc). Avoid foods that are very hot, spicy, hard or crunchy. Implant patients should avoid chewing on the implant itself. Avoid alcoholic beverages for 24 hours. Resume a normal diet as soon as possible. **DO NOT USE A STRAW FOR 5 DAYS AFTER SURGERY.**

**6. STIFFNESS OF THE JAWS:** The opening muscles of the mouth tend to stiffen with oral surgery. Prevent this by stretching your mouth open several times an hour for the first 24 hours after surgery. This will not interfere with healing or “pop” the stitches.

**7. KEEP THE MOUTH CLEAN:** Food in the surgery sites will increase the possibility of infection. DO NOT rinse your mouth until the morning after surgery. At this time, begin rinsing with warm salt water after meals and at bedtime (1/2 teaspoon salt per cup of warm water) for at least one week following surgery. Brush your teeth as usual being careful to cleanse around the wounds. DO NOT use a waterpik, mouthwash or hydrogen peroxide as they will delay the healing process.

**8. FEVER:** A low grade fever may occur 24-48 hours after surgery. This is usually controllable by drinking cool liquids and Tylenol as directed. If you have a fever of 101 °F or higher, call the office.

**9. NAUSEA:** Nausea can occur after general anesthesia. This is usually due to not eating or taking too much pain medication. Small amounts of clear carbonated beverages (7-Up, Sprite, ginger ale) taken every hour for 2-3 hours may help. Dramamine, Emetrol, or Pepcid AC are available without a prescription, and can also be helpful.

**10. SUTURES:** Dissolvable stitches are often used. They generally fall out within 4-5 days. If they fall out earlier do not be alarmed.

**11. SORE ARM:** A small amount of bruising or discomfort may occur around the IV site. A warm moist washcloth placed over the area for 15 minutes, 3-4 times a day will make it feel better.

**12. DENTURES/STAYPLATES:** If you have had extractions & new dentures placed; do not remove them for 24 hrs. Thereafter, they can be removed to rinse the mouth and the denture 3-4 times per day. Dentures should be left in as much as possible the first week after extractions, unless otherwise instructed. **Stay plates** are for “esthetic” purposes only. They are NOT to be used for biting into or chewing food

**13. EXTRACTION SITE:** You may notice a “hole” in your gum after an extraction. This will fill in with time. Rinse your mouth after meals as directed to keep it clean.

**14. WOMEN OF CHILDBEARING AGE:** Birth control pills may slightly decrease your rate of healing or prolong bleeding. Oral antibiotics may interfere with the absorption of oral contraceptives. In very rare instances you may become pregnant while taking oral contraceptives with other medications. Please be advised to use additional methods of contraception if you take birth control pills while on other medications.