



THE CENTER FOR ORAL & FACIAL SURGERY

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Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

NEXT APPOINTMENT: _____

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

ANESTHETIC EFFECTS

In cases where intravenous sedation/general anesthesia has been utilized, precautions must be taken regarding prolonged reactions such as drowsiness, dizziness, and impaired judgment. Motor vehicles must not be operated for 24 hours. Since the use of pain medication may further accentuate and prolong the anesthetic effect, appropriate precautions should be taken.

BLEEDING

Gauze has been placed in your mouth to help control bleeding. This gauze should remain in place under firm continuous pressure for 15 or 20 minutes. At that time, the gauze should be removed. A minor amount of bleeding can be expected for the first 24 hours. If bleeding should become more persistent, place a piece of folded gauze over the surgical site and bite with continuous, firm pressure for 20 minutes. If bleeding still persists, place a damp, caffeinated teabag on the site and bite firmly for 20 minutes. Do not vigorously spit for one week. Any blood that accumulates in the mouth should be permitted to run out into a tissue. Spitting creates a suction, which can disrupt the developing blood clot and lead to a dry socket. Keep the head elevated slightly when resting or sleeping.

PAIN

Discomfort in varying degrees may be expected after oral surgery. If pain medication has been prescribed, follow the directions on the container. It is suggested that pain medication be taken when you arrive home, before the numbness at the surgical site has subsided. Stiffness of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. It is normal to experience more pain or swelling on one side of the face.

SWELLING AND BRUISING

Swelling can be kept to a minimum by the application of ice packs to the face over the surgical area until the ice pack grows warm. You may continue ice off and on if you choose. It may take 48-72 hours for the swelling to reach its peak. With more extensive surgical procedures, some discoloration of the facial skin may occur. This will generally take 7-10 days to disappear. It is recommended to sleep with your head above your heart to reduce swelling overnight.

STITCHES

If stitches have been used, they will generally come out on their own in 3-5 days. The stitches will do their job within in the first 24-72 hours. If they happen to come undone or fall out after this time period, it is normal and is not necessary to replace them.

EATING

Fluids can be taken immediately, but chewing should be avoided while the surgical area is still numb which will be around 6 hours after surgery. Do not use a straw for 1 week, since this may induce bleeding or a dry socket. You should drink something soon after, perhaps a milk shake. Avoid hot or carbonated beverages for the first 48 hours. Food such as popcorn, chips, nuts, or berries should not be eaten for at least one week because they may become lodged in an extraction site. Initially, soft foods should be eaten, such as ice cream, lukewarm soups, mashed potatoes, pudding, jell-o, etc.

RINSING & CLEANING

It is important for a blood clot to form at the surgical site. To avoid disruption of the blood clot(s). Rinse the mouth very gently 2-3 times a day with warm salt water (1/2 tsp. salt in an 8 oz. glass of warm water). Do not rinse with peroxide. Continue the salt-water rinses for one week and only gently spit after rinsing. Remember that a clean mouth will heal much faster. The patient can gently brush teeth the night of the surgery, but rinse gently.

SMOKING

Smoking greatly increases the chances of developing a painful “dry socket” and inhibits healing. If you smoke, please refrain for at least 72 hours after surgery.

ACTIVITY

Activity restrictions depend upon the extent of the surgery as well as the age and medical status of the patient. In general, it is best to take it easy for the first couple of days following surgery. Some people who feel well the day after surgery overdo their activity, leading to an increase in blood pressure, with bleeding and throbbing pain. The best advice is always to “take it easy”.

MEDICATION

After your surgery, it is important to get your prescription(s) picked up before your local anesthesia wears off. You will be provided with a list of medications sent to your pharmacy of choice.

EMERGENCIES OR QUESTIONS

If any problems should arise, call 281-392-1130. If you are calling after hours, please press 0 to get in touch with one of our doctors on call. Do not wait until your follow-up appointment to communicate problems.