



## POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

With proper attention to postoperative care, most surgical procedures involving the oral cavity will heal quickly and without complication.

**1. CONTROL OF BLEEDING:** Maintain gentle pressure by biting on the gauze sponge that has been placed over the surgical area. Do this for at least 30 minutes to an hour. If bleeding continues, replace sterile sponge with another moist one and maintain pressure for another 30 minutes. Some oozing of blood is normal following oral surgery and it may persist until the next day. Do not replace gauze if there is no active bleeding. Try to avoid swallowing blood, as this can cause nausea and vomiting. If you have blood in your mouth, do not spit, just open your mouth and let it drool out. Avoid hot food and beverages the day of the surgery and strenuous activity, as this can elevate your blood pressure and reinitiate bleeding.

**2. RINSING:** You can gently rinse the day of surgery. After 24 hours, rinse with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon table salt in 8 oz. of warm water) 3 times a day for the next 7 days. The use of commercial mouthwashes during the healing period is not recommended. If you are prescribed a mouth rinse, please use it twice a day.

**3. PAIN:** Following oral surgery, it is normal to experience some discomfort. Appropriate pain medication will be prescribed by the surgeon if he/she feels it will be necessary. If none has been prescribed, Ibuprofen or extra-strength Tylenol should be helpful. 3 Ibuprofen (i.e. 600 mg) taken every 6-8 hours acts as an anti-inflammatory and controls most postoperative discomfort. If you are prescribed pain medicine that has narcotics in it (e.g. Vicodin or Percocet), do not combine it with alcohol, drive or operate machinery.

**4. SWELLING:** Swelling of the jaw and facial tissues often follows oral surgery. To minimize swelling, apply an ice bag as soon as possible to the affected side of the face for a 15 minute interval. This may be repeated every 30 minutes for the next 6 hours postoperatively. The ice bag should be used only on the day of surgery; although swelling may persist and even increase for the next day or two before it begins to subside. At times, difficulty in fully opening the mouth will follow. As the swelling resolves, a normal degree of opening will return.

**5. THE TOOTHBRUSH & ORAL HYGIENE:** The toothbrush can be used to maintain good Oral Hygiene. A clean mouth heals faster. Avoid brushing over the sutures.

**6. DIET:** Adequate food and fluid intake is most important. Avoid solid food that requires chewing. Start with soft foods and nourishing liquids. Advance the consistency of your diet gradually when you can chew comfortably and after checking with your doctor.

**7. AVOID:** Avoid alcohol until healing is well established. Do not smoke.

**8. SUTURES:** If sutures were used, most of the time they are resorbable and they will dissolve in 7-10 days. If non-resorbable sutures were used, they are usually removed in 7 days.

**9. FACIAL BRUISING:** With some surgical procedures, facial bruising can happen. Usually it takes 7-10 days to gradually resolve.

**10. COMPLICATIONS:** Prolonged or excessive discomfort, swelling, bleeding or fever seldom arise; however, if there is a problem, you should contact the surgeon so that further direct instructions for your care may be given.

I have read and understand the instructions given to me. I have had a chance to ask questions regarding these instructions and they have been answered.

Patient Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_