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Post-Operative Instructions

Day of Surgery:

First Hour: Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may be changed as necessary (typically every 30-45 minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff for more comfortable positioning.

Exercise Care: Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do **NOT** rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. You may brush your teeth gently. Please **DO NOT** smoke for at least 48 hours, since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause dry socket.

Oozing: Intermittent bleeding or oozing over night is normal. Bleeding may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the areas and biting on the gauze for 30-60 minutes at a time. The best way to access the bleeding is to look directly at the extraction site without the gauze in place.

Persistent Bleeding: Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy, you may have to **substitute a tea bag** (soaked in cold water, squeezed damp-dry and place inside freezer for up to 5 minutes) for 20-30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call the office.

Swelling: Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag, or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjunct to the surgical area.

Pain: Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription pain medication. **If you take the pill before the anesthetic is worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort better.** Some patients find that stronger pain medication causes nausea, but if you proceed each pain pill with a small amount of food, chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medications are widely among individuals. If you do not achieve adequate relief at first, you may supplement each pain pill with an aspirin or ibuprofen. Some patients may require two of the pain pills at one time. If the pain is not relieved by two of the pain pills prescribed on the 4th, 5th, or 6th day after the surgery, you may have a "dry socket". Please call the office if you have these symptoms. Remember that the most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic wears off: after that your need for medicine should lessen.

Nausea: Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometime pain medications are the cause. Nausea can be reduced by proceeding each pain pill with a small amount of food, and taking the pill with a large amount of water. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you don't feel better. Classic Coca Cola may help with nausea.

Diet: Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. Its advisable to confine the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.) It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less

discomfort and heal faster. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

Sharp Edges: If you feel something hard or sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling bony walls which once supported the extracted tooth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause discomfort, please call the office.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS:

Mouth Rinses: Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use Listerine or ¼ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily.

Brushing: Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every attempt to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

Hot Applications: On the 3rd day after surgery you may apply warm compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (hot water bottle, hot moist towels, heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.

Healing: Normal healing after tooth extractions should be as follows: The first two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement. If you don't continue improvement, please call our office. At your two week follow up, you are given a plastic irrigating syringe. Use it daily according to the instructions until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the office where you had surgery. A 24-hour answering service is available to contact the doctor on call after hours. Calling during business hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern.