

# Routine Post operative instructions following oral surgery

*“Additional instructions unique to your surgery” may also be found on this website.*

## MEDICATIONS

---

You may have received a prescription for any of the following: pain medications, an antibiotic or an oral rinse. **Please have the prescriptions filled at a pharmacy on your way home.** The antibiotics should be started within two to four hours following surgery. The oral rinse should be started the day following surgery.

## PAIN

---

Post-operative pain is a normal response of the body to any surgical procedure. The local anaesthetic or freezing that was administered during your surgery will probably last from four to six hours. It is advisable to have pain medication on board prior to the freezing wearing off and pain is actually experienced. You will be given pain medication before you leave, please take another within 2 hours.

As long as pain continues, use the pain medications as prescribed. The pain usually peaks in twenty-four to forty-eight hours. On the third day we expect the pain to level off and gradually start getting better. An increase in pain on the fourth day or later can indicate a problem and our office should be contacted.

A throbbing or sharp shooting pain along the jaw line, 4 days or more after surgery may indicate the development of an incomplete healing or “dry socket”. This discomfort is easily relieved by a sedative dressing applied in our office. Please contact our office if this is a concern.

### *Please Note:*

***Pain medications taken on an empty stomach can result in an unsettled feeling and/or nausea and vomiting. This can also be caused by blood in the stomach. Please take food or fluids before your pain tablets. For nausea you should use Gravol which can be purchased at your pharmacy (suppositories are preferable if you are very nauseated or vomiting).***

## CONTROL OF POST-OPERATIVE BLEEDING

---

It is normal to bleed or ooze for some time following oral surgery. It is not unusual to have blood on the gauze for the day and night of surgery. It is also not unusual to have blood on the pillow or in the saliva for 3-4 days after surgery. To control the bleeding, the gauze should be placed directly over the surgical site and firm pressure applied. Change your gauze every 30 - 45 minutes until you are seeing very little spotting or pink staining on the gauze. At this point you no longer require the gauze. If the oozing continues or reoccurs the following day reapply the gauze until it subsides.

If you're having difficulty controlling the bleeding, or run out of gauze, you may purchase more gauze or use a regular black tea bag moistened and placed over the surgical sites. Do not chew the gauze or tea bags; a constant firm pressure is most effective in controlling the bleeding.

## SWELLING AND STIFFNESS

---

This occurs following almost all extractions and oral surgery. This is nature's way of aiding the healing process by splinting and resting the surgical site. The swelling is at its maximum on the second or third day following surgery and begins to disappear on the fourth day. In order to help minimize the swelling, ice packs should be applied for the first 2 - 3 days alternating ice, on and off, 20 - 45 minutes at a time during waking hours. By the third day the swelling should have peaked and cold will not be effective. A gentle massage with a hot face cloth should be used 15 minutes every hour you're awake for 2 - 3 days.

The swelling normally disappears in about a week. At times, swelling is an indication of infection. In such cases the swelling continues to increase beyond the fourth day, or suddenly reappears after initial healing. The patient could feel quite ill, and there is often an elevated temperature. If this should occur please contact the office. A slight post-operative temperature elevation (for 2 - 3 days) is normal following surgery and anaesthesia. Careful attention to oral hygiene will greatly reduce the possibility of infection.

Return of normal jaw movement may take up to 3 weeks; during this time we recommend jaw exercises to reduce stiffness. These should start the day after surgery.

## DISCOLORATION OF THE SKIN

---

Bruising of the facial tissues following oral surgery is not uncommon. The bruising may occur within the first 3 - 5 days and may appear dark purple to a greenish yellow color. The bruising occasionally migrates, due to gravity, into the neck or upper chest area and normally will disappear in seven to ten days. Gentle massage with a warm face cloth for fifteen minutes each waking hour will aid in a gradual return to normal.

## **DIET AND NUTRITION**

---

Following oral surgery your body requires adequate fluids and nourishment. While your jaw is frozen, drink only liquids, or foods that require no chewing such as soup, Jell-O, pudding, yogurt, apple sauce, juices or pop. You should be drinking about 2 - 3 litres a day for the first few days. Once the freezing has worn off start with a soft diet, pasta, eggs, ground meat, casseroles, cooked vegetables, fish, chicken, etc. A gradual return to your regular diet as you are able to tolerate it is recommended. Avoid foods that break down into hard crunchy bits, chips, popcorn, nachos, pretzels, whole grain or crusty breads, seeds, nuts and raw vegetables. These foods are easily lodged in the surgical area, and are very difficult to rinse out, possibly causing an infection. Avoidance of these foods for 1 -2 weeks is advised.

## **SMOKING**

---

Smoking is discouraged during the healing period (2 - 4 weeks). Smoke is an irritant and will retard healing. It can increase post-operative bleeding and lead to increased risk of infection and dry sockets.

## **SUTURES**

---

Self dissolving sutures are routinely used. These will release or dissolve in 1 - 10 days. Loose sutures may be gently removed with tweezers or the long ends can be carefully trimmed.

## **ORAL HYGIENE**

---

### **PROPER ORAL HYGIENE IS ESSENTIAL TO REDUCE INFECTION AND ENHANCE HEALING.**

Rinsing should be started the day following surgery. Rinse frequently, first thing in the morning, following all meals, and before you go to bed.

Gently swish rinse with warm salt water (1 tsp. Salt to an 8 oz cup of water). If salt water cannot be tolerated you may use a non alcohol based mouth wash (diluted half and half with water) or at the very least plain tap water. If you've been provided with a syringe, you may fill it with rinse solution then place it directly over the surgical sites or sockets and flush the area as necessary. You may notice food debris being washed from the surgical sites for a period of time. This is normal.

Some people will have a prescription rinse, which should be used following the salt water rinses. It should be used 4 times a day until finished.

## **TEMPORARY NUMBNESS OR TINGLING IN THE LIP OR TONGUE**

---

Due to the position of many impacted teeth, sensory nerves supplying the lip or tongue are occasionally involved during surgery. Numbness or tingling or an altered sensation in the lower lip and/or tongue can occur requiring several weeks, months or even up to 2 years for normal function to return. In extremely rare situations, normal sensation does not return.

## **INTRAVENOUS SEDATION AND GENERAL ANAESTHETIC PATIENTS**

---

Patients who have had general anaesthetic may experience muscle pains especially around the neck and shoulders, but this can occur anywhere including the chest, back, legs and arms. The pain is often like that which occurs after heavy exercise. It is caused by an anaesthetic drug, and although it is inconvenient and uncomfortable, it is not unusual or dangerous to experience these symptoms. The stiffness and discomfort usually lasts for only two to three days, but can linger for up to one week. It is best treated by rest, heat and your post-operative pain pills. Patients having a general anaesthetic will have had a nasal breathing tube while they were asleep. It may appear that you have had a nosebleed or your nose may be stuffy. It is recommended that you **NOT** blow your nose for several days. Nasal sprays or decongestants may be used to relieve these symptoms. It is not uncommon to have a sore throat from this tube. The sore throat is best treated with your pain medication, plenty of fluids and lozenges such as Bradasol™ or Screts™. If discomfort or pain persists at IV site for more than 2 weeks please call our office.

## **HERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT MUST BE OBSERVED**

**DO NOT** leave the patient alone until the morning following surgery.

**ABSOLUTELY NO** driving or operating any machinery for the first 24 hours following surgery, or as long as you're taking prescription pain medication.

**ABSOLUTELY NO** alcohol or recreational drugs for two weeks following surgery, or as long as you're taking prescription medications.

---

**If you have any questions or problems, do not hesitate to call our office at 454-6565 or 1-800-379-9474.** If your call is not answered by the answering service, hang up and call again in five minutes. We apologize for this inconvenience as the lines may be occupied by other callers. There is an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon on call **ALL HOURS OF THE DAY.**

**WE PREFER THAT YOU CALL OUR OFFICE FIRST RATHER THAN YOUR OWN DENTIST OR FAMILY DOCTOR. However, if you are experiencing severe bleeding or breathing problems requiring IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, please proceed to the nearest Emergency Department or Dial 911.**