

PATIENT CARE FOLLOWING DENTAL SURGERY

To ensure rapid healing and to avoid complications that could be both harmful and painful to you, please follow these instructions carefully.

- 1. Bleeding.** To prevent unnecessary bleeding, maintain gentle pressure over the surgery site(s) by biting on gauze. You have been given a supply of gauze pads. If more are required, they can be purchased at a drug store or supermarket. Biting on a tea bag that has been moistened and wrapped in a piece of gauze also helps stop bleeding. Pressure should be continued for one to two hours or until most of the bleeding has stopped. Change the packs every 15 to 20 minutes or when saturated. It is not unusual to have some slight oozing for up to 24 hours. Rest today and keep your head slightly elevated. Do not engage in physical activity since this stimulates bleeding.
- 2. Medications.** Unless you already have your medications, pick them up very soon and take as directed. Frequently with oral surgery, a long-acting local anesthetic is used- especially if bone was removed. This prevents pain, but may also prolong numbness for up to 12 hours. Take pain medication when you first start to feel discomfort. It is usually best the first day to take the medication regularly as directed on the bottle. After this you may take the medicine on an as needed basis. Antibiotic medications need to be taken until all of the pills are consumed. If you have been given a sedative (such as valium), do not drive for at least 24 hours after the procedure. Note: the taking of some antibiotics can temporarily nullify the effects of oral contraceptives.
- 3. Eating.** It is important to get adequate nutrition after surgery to help the healing process. Liquid food supplements and soft foods (e.g. yogurt, ice cream, soup, etc.) are indicated for the first 24-48 hours. Progress to firmer foods as healing progresses. If wisdom teeth were removed, your jaw is temporarily weaker than before surgery. For that reason, you should not chew forcefully or participate in contact sports for 3-4 weeks. Doing so may result in a broken jaw.
- 4. Rinsing and Brushing.** Do not rinse for the first day of surgery since this could dislodge the blood clot and lead to a condition called dry socket. After 24 hours, begin rinsing with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon of salt in 8 oz. of warm water) 3-4 times a day for four to five days. Besides rinsing too soon, other actions that can lead to a dry socket are smoking and drinking through a straw. Brushing the area lightly can start the day after surgery. You can increase the force as healing progresses.
- 5. Ice Packs.** To help minimize swelling, ice packs should be applied to the face adjacent to the surgery site(s). This is especially important if bone was removed. To the extent possible, apply these ice packs for periods of 20 minutes on and 5 minutes off until bedtime on the day of surgery. Ice is not particularly beneficial after the first day. With most oral surgery, swelling peaks at about 48 hours and then starts to go down. Significant swelling beyond this time could indicate infection. If this occurs contact our office.
- 6. Postoperative Evaluation.** If necessary the surgery site needs to be examined to make sure healing has progressed normally. In addition, sutures may need to be removed. The date and time for your postoperative appointment is:
_____.
- 7. Unforeseen Complications.** Sometimes patients develop allergies to medications, infection (foul taste or prolonged swelling), and dry sockets (throbbing pain 3-5 days after surgery). If you suspect any problems with healing, do not hesitate to call our office or the doctor at home. These telephone numbers are:

Office: 919-847-7100

Pager: 919-505-3039

Your comfort is our top priority. If any conditions arise or if you have any question or concerns, please contact us. It continues to be our pleasure to assist you in any way possible.