

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXTRACTION SURGERY

### DAY OF SURGERY

**FIRST HOUR:** Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. The gauze may be gently removed after 20-30 minutes. If active bleeding persists, place a new gauze or moist tea bag over the extraction site/s and bite down to obtain pressure over the surgical sites for another 30 minutes. Place the gauze or tea bag directly over the surgery site and not between the teeth next to it. The gauze or tea bag may then be changed as necessary (**typically every 20 to 30 minutes until active bleeding has stopped and the gauze has a pink color**). It is best to lightly moisten the gauze or tea bag with tap water prior to placement. Have patient recline on the ride home and watch to ensure they do not accidentally chew on their tongue or lip while still numb.

**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 and as little as possible afterwards. Smoking is detrimental to healing and may contribute to a dry socket or infection.

**OOZING:** Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. Bleeding may be controlled by placing fresh gauze or tea bags over the surgical areas and biting on the gauze or tea bags for 20-30 minutes at a time.

**PERSISTENT BLEEDING:** Bleeding should never be severe or excessive. If this does occur, 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 and verify they are over the extraction sites and not between the teeth next to the surgical sites. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office. **Do not leave gauze in your mouth while sleeping, eating or drinking.** But do place a towel across your pillow to help catch any small amount of blood that may come out while laying down.

**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 adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery. **DO NOT APPLY ICE AFTER THE FIRST 24 HOURS AS THIS MAY CAUSE JAW MUSCLES TO TIGHTEN.** If you have been prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed.

**PAIN:** Unfortunately most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication. **If you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort better.** Some patients find that stronger pain medicine causes nausea, but if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food, chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals. Some patients may even require two of the pain pills at one time. Remember that the most severe pain is usually the first six to twelve hours after the local anesthetic wears off; afterwards, your need for medicine should lessen, but significant soreness is normal up to a week following surgery. **If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office. If you anticipate needing more prescription medication for the weekend, please call for a refill during weekday business hours.**

**NAUSEA:** Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometimes pain medications are the cause. Nausea can be reduced by preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food, and taking the pill with a large volume of water. Classic Coca Cola or other carbonated drinks may also help with nausea. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better.

**DIET:** Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. **Do not use a straw for the first week after surgery.** It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, 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! **Taking nourishment and remaining hydrated regularly will make you feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort, and heal faster.** If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

**SHARP EDGES:** If you feel something hard or something that has sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls which once supported the extracted teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following weeks. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office.

**SUTURES:** If sutures were placed, they will likely dissolve in approximately one week. However, if the doctor placed a non-dissolving suture, it will be removed at your next post-operative appointment, typically 2 weeks after your surgery.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS**

**MOUTH RINSES:** Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use 1/4 teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8-12 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two times daily. If you were prescribed a mouth rinse, please rinse with it as directed in lieu of the salt water. **Use the irrigating syringe no earlier than 4-5 days after surgery.**

**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 effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort. The likelihood of infection is reduced when the mouth remains clean. Brush your teeth at least twice per day.

**HOT APPLICATIONS:** After the first two days, 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 and loosen tight muscles. This will also help decrease stiffness. The ice pack we have provided can also be used as a heat pack when placed in the microwave. If you choose to microwave this ice pack please watch it carefully and take it out every 10 seconds to check on its temperature. If left unattended it may pop in the microwave. Massaging Aspercreme into the muscles 2-3x per day may also help reduce muscle soreness.

**HEALING:** Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: The first five 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 see continued improvement, please call our office. If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, **DO NOT use it for the first four days.** On the fourth day place salt water or the prescribed mouthwash into the syringe and irrigate the sockets daily until you are certain the socket has closed completely, this may take a few weeks. If sutures were placed, they will dissolve approximately one week after surgery but may come out sooner, this is completely normal.

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 our office at 303-663-7890. A 24-hour answering service is available to contact the doctor on call after hours. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern.