

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR BIOPSIES

*****PLEASE READ ALL OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY*****

Procedure

A biopsy is any procedure which is either incisional (small piece) or excisional (all of an area including margins) of tissue or bone is taken and sent to a pathologist for examination to determine its origin.

Bleeding

Some bleeding is expected after any surgical procedure and is a normal part of healing. If you have had a biopsy inside your mouth you will need to moisten your gauze, squeeze out excess water then place gauze in order to apply pressure to the area. If your procedure was outside the mouth you will need to hold gauze in place in order to apply pressure. Bleeding can continue for up to 72 hours after a procedure, especially if the area has been stimulated by movement. If any sutures have been placed, most in the mouth will dissolve on their own in 7-10 days. If a non-dissolving suture is placed you will be informed and they will be removed at your post-op appointment. On the ride home, have the patient recline and watch for chewing of the tongue.

Diet

Eat soft, easy-to-chew food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. 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 or around the biopsy site. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. Please avoid chewing directly on the biopsy site. It is important not to skip meals. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

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 and may be used 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.

Rinsing / Wound Care

If your procedure was inside the mouth, you should rinse with warm salt water rinses starting the day after your surgery (1 teaspoon salt in a glass of warm water), 2-3 times a day for at least 1 week following the procedure to help promote healing. If your biopsy was outside the mouth you will need to keep it covered when you shower to keep it as dry as possible, changing the dressing regularly will help prevent infection but you should also allow the area to breathe so it will heal. After your sutures are removed, apply sunscreen to the area when outside to prevent excessive scarring.

Medication

Over the counter medications are usually sufficient to maintain comfort. If you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort better. Although recovery from anesthesia is different for each patient, the first pain pill may be taken approximately 6-12 hrs after surgery to minimize discomfort. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals. 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.