



Louisville Oral Surgery and Dental Implants

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POST-OPERATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS

PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. The after-effects of oral surgery vary per individual, so not all of these instructions may apply. Please feel free to call our office any time should you have any questions, or are experiencing any unusual symptoms following your treatment.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY. Patients who received a general anesthetic should return home from the office immediately upon discharge, and lie down with the head elevated until all the effects of the anesthetic have disappeared. Anesthetic effects vary by individual, and you may feel drowsy for a short period of time or for several hours. You should not operate any mechanical equipment or drive a motor vehicle for at least 24 hours or longer if you feel any residual effect from the anesthetic.

PAIN AND MEDICATIONS. Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. Take the pain medications prescribed as directed. The local anesthetic administered with the general anesthetic during your surgery normally has a 3-hour duration, and it may be difficult to control the pain once the anesthetic wears off. If you have been prescribed Motrin (ibuprofen), this should be taken as soon as possible after surgery and every six hours thereafter. In addition to Motrin (ibuprofen), a narcotic may have been prescribed for moderate to severe pain. Taking the pain medication with soft food and a large volume of water will lessen any side effects of nausea or stomach upset.

If you were prescribed an antibiotic and are currently taking oral contraceptives, you should use an alternate method of birth control for the remainder of this cycle.

ORAL HYGIENE AND CARE. Do not disturb the surgical area today. Close down gently but firmly on the gauze pack that we have initially placed over the surgical area, making sure that they remain in place. Do not change them for the first 90 minutes unless the bleeding is not being controlled. This is important to allow blood clot formation on the surgery site. The gauze may be changed when necessary and/or repositioned for comfort. **DO NOT** drink with a straw and **DO NOT** rinse or brush your teeth vigorously or probe the area with the tongue, any objects, or your fingers. **DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours, since it is detrimental to the healing process.

Starting the day after surgery, rinse your mouth with a warm salt water rinse (1/2 tsp. salt with 1 cup water) every 2-3 hours. Continue this for several days, then rinse 3-4 times a day for the next 2 weeks. You may start normal toothbrushing the day after the surgery. It is imperative to keep your mouth clean, since an accumulation of food or debris may promote infection. Soreness and swelling may prevent rigorous brushing of all areas, but make every effort to clean your teeth within your comfort level.

BLEEDING. Some bleeding is normal, and blood-tinged saliva may be present for 24-48 hours. This may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the surgical area by biting down firmly for 30-60 minutes. Mild bleeding may occur after rinsing or brushing. This is normal.

STEADY BLEEDING. Bleeding should not be severe. If bleeding persists, this may be due to the gauze pads being clenched between the teeth rather than exerting pressure on the surgery

site. Try repositioning the gauze. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy, substitute a **moist tea bag** (first soaked in hot water, squeezed dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) on the area for 30-40 minutes. If bleeding continues, please call our office.

SWELLING AND BRUISING. Swelling is to be expected, and usually reaches its maximum in 48-72 hours. To minimize swelling, cold packs or ice bag wrapped in a towel should be applied at the face adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 20 minutes on then removed for 20 minutes during the first 24-48 hours after surgery, as necessary. If you were prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed. Bruising may also occur, but should disappear soon. Tightness of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening the mouth. This should disappear within 7 days. Keep lips moist with cream or Vaseline to prevent cracking or chapping.

DIET. Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. It is advisable to confine the first day's food intake to bland liquids or pureed or soft foods. Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds or popcorn, which may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days, you may progress to more solid foods. Proper nourishment aids in the healing process. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal diet as much as possible and follow your physician's instructions regarding your insulin schedule.

ORTHODONTIC APPLIANCES. If you wear orthodontic appliances, replace them immediately after surgery unless otherwise instructed. If these appliances are left out of the mouth for any length of time, it is often difficult or impossible to reinsert them.

DRY SOCKETS. The blood clot on the surgical site may be lost causing a **dry socket** (usually on the 3rd to 5th day). There will be a noticeable, distinct, persistent pain in the jaw area, often radiating toward the ear and forward along the jaw which may cause other teeth to ache. If you do not see steady improvement during the first few days after surgery or if severe pain persists, please call the office to report these symptoms.

SKIN DISCOLORATION. This may be expected, and is usually limited to the neck or cheek area near the surgical site. This is caused by bleeding through the mucous membranes of the mouth beneath the skin and appears as a bruise. If discoloration occurs, it often takes a week or more for this to completely disappear. Occasionally, the arm or hand near the site where the needle was placed to administer IV drugs may remain inflamed and tender. This is caused by chemical irritation in the vein. Aspirin and application of heat on the area will usually correct these symptoms.

NUMBNESS. Loss of sensation of the lip and chin may occur, usually following lower wisdom teeth removal. This is usually temporary and disappears within a few days or weeks. Occasionally, some numbness may persist for months, due to the close association of the roots of the teeth to the nerve that supplies sensation to these areas described. If this situation should occur, please inform your doctor as soon as possible.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. If you have any questions about your progress or any symptoms you are experiencing, please call our office at (502) 231-2230, (502) 937-2500 or (270) 351-3366.