

# POST SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

CALL/TEXT: 209-524-7347

**Remember:** Dental surgery is a serious surgical procedure. Post-operative care is VERY important. Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be avoided if the instructions are followed carefully.

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## IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY

- Once home and comfortable, change the gauze packs from the surgical sites and begin the process of resting with ice packs on your face.
  - When the numbness is gone, it is important to get food and fluids back in your system. Remove the gauze and attempt to eat soft food or liquid diet (yogurt, applesauce, mashed potatoes, soup, or a smoothie). Remember: NO STRAWS
  - Take pain medication and antibiotics with food and not on an empty stomach.
  - After eating and taking your medication, lie down with your head elevated and return the ice packs to your face.
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**GAUZE:** Keep your gauze in your mouth undisturbed. It can be removed and discarded hourly if desired. We have supplied extra gauze for you in your take-home kit.

**BLEEDING:**

- You will bleed. It is normal to have oozing of blood. You will notice blood in your saliva for the first 12-24 hours.
- Use a hand towel or old rag to protect your pillow as some drooling can occur when you are numb.
- If excessive bleeding (deep red blood that does not seem to stop) continues or begins, apply firm pressure with 1-2 folded moist gauze pads or a damp tea bag on the affected area for 30-60 minutes and keep your head elevated.
- If the bleeding does not stop, please call/text Dr. Fletcher at the number provided.

**HYGIENE:**

- A blood clot will form and needs to remain in place to allow your surgery site to heal.
- You can perform **VERY gentle** warm salt water rinses for the first 24-48 hours (1tsp salt in a cup of warm water). Take at least 5 minutes to gently rinse your mouth with the entire cup of water. This can be done as often as you want, but try to rinse at least 5-6 times a day, especially after eating.
- Brush teeth daily after surgery, but be gentle and avoid the surgical sites.

**ACTIVITY:**

- Restrict your activities on the day of surgery, and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable.
- Remember: NO STRAWS, SUCTION OR SMOKING for the first 24 hours.

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## PAIN:

- Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside more and more every day, but many patients report a spike in pain on the 3rd or 4th day after surgery.
- For severe pain take the pain medication that has been prescribed. The medication will make you drowsy and can slow down your reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery.
- Avoid smoking and alcoholic beverages, which **both increase pain during recovery**.
- If you cannot take narcotics and you are able to take Advil®, Motrin® or Ibuprofen, 600 mg every 4–6 hours combined with one 500mg Tylenol®/Acetaminophen can be safely taken with or alternated with the prescription pain medication. This will help control breakthrough pain.
- **After 48 hours** you can also use a heating pad to decrease swelling which will decrease pain.

## SWELLING:

- The amount of swelling is based on the extent of surgery you had completed. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and sides of the face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair.
- Most swelling is evident on the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until day 2 or 3.
- To reduce swelling, immediately after surgery use ice packs continuously while you are awake.
- **After 48 hours**, any swelling or jaw stiffness should be treated by alternating the application of moist heat and ice-packs to the sides of the face to reduce the size of the swelling.

## DIET:

- Do not chew on the surgical site until healing is complete. **(Possibly up to 1 month)**
- Maintaining a proper diet is very important to your recovery. Eating regularly will make you feel better, help you regain your strength, and heal faster. Initially, you may want to eat soft foods and cool liquids, but you may eat what you want as soon as it feels comfortable.
- Try to avoid foods like nuts, seeds, chips and popcorn that may irritate the surgical sites.
- Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours following surgery or while taking prescription pain medication. Avoid using a straw until healing is complete.
- If you are diabetic, monitor your blood sugar, take your diabetic medication, and maintain as normal a diet as possible.

## STITCHES:

- Some surgeries allow for self-dissolving sutures. In that case, they will become gummy and dissolve within 2-3 weeks of placement.
- Non-resorbable stitches will be monitored weekly and removed after 10-14 days.
- If the sutures loosen or fall out on their own, that is okay.
- If the sutures are interfering with chewing/function, please let us know so that we can trim them for you.

- MEDICATIONS:** Take all medications as directed. If Dr. Fletcher has prescribed pain medication, you may take it regularly for the first three days and then as needed.

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## FEVER:

- You may expect a slight fever or chills for the first 24 hours.
- If a fever begins or persists after 24 hours, it may be the sign of an infection, please call/text our office at the number provided.

## BONE GRAFTING:

- Bone grafting material in our office come in a variety of shapes sizes, but often look like small yellow/white particles that are placed under the gums and covered with a clotting plug and stitched into place.
- It is important that this surgical wound is left alone. Do not eat against the site. Do not place your temporary/partial onto the wound.
- You may find some small granules in your mouth for the first several days. Do not be alarmed by these. It's normal to have some of them come out of the bone grafting site and into your mouth.
- Do not apply pressure with your tongue or fingers to the grafted area, as the material is movable during the initial healing.
- Do not smoke.
- Do not brush the graft site or rinse with a water-pik.

## SURGICAL SPLINT:

- Sometimes we use silicone putty-like material or a plastic splint to cover the surgical site. This is designed to "protect" and stabilize the graft material.
- Leave it undisturbed while it is in your mouth and we will remove it with your stitches.
- If small pieces of the material break off or if the whole covering dislodges, do not be concerned.

- REMOVABLE DENTAL APPLIANCES:** If you normally wear a removable appliance which replaces missing teeth, and it rests on the operated area, it is best to minimize use of this appliance as any pressure on the surgical site could be detrimental to healing and cause discomfort. We will give your personal instructions for your device.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE DURING OFFICE HOURS OR CALL/TEXT DR. FLETCHER AT 209-524-7347 AFTER HOURS.**

### YOUR SURGERY TODAY INCLUDED:

- Your Sutures WILL dissolve.
- Your Sutures WILL NOT dissolve.
- Bone grafting crystals.
- Bone grafting plug
- Membrane

Antibiotic Rx:

Pain Meds Rx:

OTC: Every 4 - 6hrs as needed  
200mg Ibuprofen x 3  
500mg Acetaminophen x 1