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Post-operative Instructions after Oral Surgery

Post-operative care reduces discomfort and accelerates the healing process. Pain, infection, and swelling can be minimized if the instructions are followed.

Quicktips:

- **No spitting or sucking through a straw.**
- **Low activity level for the next 48 hours.**
- **Rinse with warm salt water after 24 hours.**
- **No smoking for 48 hours.**
- **Start taking pain medication (600mg ibuprofen unless otherwise recommended) before the anesthetic has worn off.**

Bleeding

Some bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon after surgery. Excessive bleeding may be controlled by first rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for thirty minutes. Repeat if necessary.

Avoid spitting, sucking through a straw, and any other similar action for 2-3 days so as to let the blood clot. When rinsing your mouth or brushing your teeth, make sure water falls out of your mouth instead of spitting it out.

If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened, squeeze dried Lipton tea bag for sixty minutes, repeat as necessary. The tannic acid in the dry tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, sit upright and avoid exercise. If bleeding does not subside, call for further instructions.

For a homeopathic remedy, you may try using 30x Phosphorus every 4-6 hours.

Swelling

Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and sides of the face is common after surgery. The swelling will start the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days later. You can reduce swelling by applying ice packs to the side of the face where surgery was performed. The ice packs should be left on while you are awake with a 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off cycle.

After 24 hours, ice has no beneficial effect. Thirty-six hours following surgery, switch from applying cold to applying moist heat to the sides of the face to reduce swelling.

Pain

For moderate pain take Motrin/Advil/Ibuprofen 200 mg, 3 pills every 4-6 hours or Aleve (Naproxen Sodium)

225mg, 2 pills every 8-12 hours.

For a homeopathic remedy use one of each every 30 minutes:

- 30x Hypericum Perforatum
- 30x Arnica Montana
- 30x Ruta Graveolens

For severe pain, take the pain medicine prescribed as directed. Pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes, so avoid alcohol and do not drive a car or operate machinery. Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside over time. If pain persists or grows in intensity, call the office.

Diet

Your diet should be soft for 48 hours after surgery. Chew on the side opposite to the surgical site. High calorie and protein intake is very important. Avoid foods such as seeds, chips, and popcorn kernels that can get lodged in the extraction site, causing an infection. Don't skip meals and remember to drink plenty of fluids.

Keep the mouth clean

You can brush your teeth the night of surgery but rinse gently and allow the fluid to fall from your mouth instead of spitting. 24 hours after surgery, begin rinsing 5-6 times a day, after eating, with a cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt.

Discoloration/bruising

In some cases, your skin may become discolored. This is a normal and may occur 2-3 days after your procedure. Moist heat applied to the area may speed healing.

Antibiotics

If you have been prescribed antibiotics, take as directed to prevent infection. Take the entire dose of antibiotics, even if all symptoms disappear. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or allergic reaction and inform the office.

Sutures

If sutures have been placed in the area of surgery to minimize bleeding and to help healing they will dissolve on their own between 5 days and 2 weeks. If they become dislodged just remove the suture from your mouth and discard it.

Other Issues

If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm because its usually temporary. Be careful because if your lip or tongue is numb, you could accidentally bite it.

Slightly elevated temperature immediately after surgery is common. If the fever persists, notify the office and take Tylenol or ibuprofen..

Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. These are the bony walls that supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out on their own or can be removed.

If the corners of your mouth are stretched, dried, or cracked, your lips should be kept moist with lip balm or Vaseline.

Sore throats and pain when swallowing are common. This will subside in 2-3 days.

Stiffness (trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a and will go away with time.

A dry socket is when the blood clot dissolves prematurely from the tooth socket. Symptoms of pain at the surgical site and ear pain may occur 2-3 days following surgery. Pain should not increase with time. If it does, call the office.

Other information

Every case is unique, so don't accept advice from friends. Discuss your problem with the people best able to help you: Dr. Teplitsky or the office staff.

If you have any questions please call the office. If there is an emergency you can reach
Dr. Teplitsky at (773)975-6666.