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**Post-Operative Instructions for Oral Surgery**  
**Extractions and Bone Grafts**

1. **Bleeding** will likely be present for several hours, and oozing which results in bright red saliva is common for 24 hours after surgery. Bite gently on gauze for 2 hours after your surgery. This allows a clot to form, insuring proper healing. Fresh gauze (which we have given you) may be inserted every hour. Should bleeding continue after 2 hours, bite gently on a wet tea bag for 1-2 hours using a standard, non-herbal, tea bag. Avoid rinsing for 24 hours, and call us if your mouth fills with large blood clots.

2. **Swelling** is to be expected, often peaks on the 3rd day and is usually gone by the seventh day. Apply an ice bag to the side of your face where the surgery was performed to help reduce the swelling. Hold ice in place for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for 48 hours. Some swelling and discoloration of the skin are common and need not cause alarm. However, if swelling continues to enlarge after three days or if the swelling is hot/red, contact our office immediately. Normal swelling may last for 7 to 10 days. Sleeping with the head elevated (an extra pillow or two) can help reduce swelling and discomfort. Starting three days after surgery (two days of using ice + one extra day), moist heat (heating pad, microwaved heating pad with cover, or hot water bottle) will help reduce residual swelling.

3. **Food:** Please do not eat, drink, or rinse your mouth for 3 hours after surgery. After 3 hours, begin with liquid foods for 7 days and then soft/ liquid foods for 3 weeks. Avoid foods likely to get caught in the surgery site or tear the stitches such as chips, nuts, rice, popcorn, etc. Avoid hot food, drinks, or active chewing while your mouth is still numb; avoid very hot food and drinks for two weeks. Blenderized (drinkable) foods, and protein/nutritional drinks are very helpful during this period. Drink at least 6-8 large glasses of liquids per day.

4. **Stitches** (Sutures) may dissolve on their own or may need to be removed in one week. This will be taken care of at your post-operative appointment. Stitches falling out present no problems unless persistent bleeding occurs.

5. **Alcohol and Smoking** should be avoided for three days after extractions and for seven days with grafts.

6. A **“dry” socket** is more likely if you use alcohol, tobacco (smoking) or birth-control drugs. It usually presents as pain 3-7 days after surgery at the extraction site, not relieved by pain medications, and will be treated with placement of a medicated dressing.

7. **Avoid** the following during the recuperation period:

- Spitting or rinsing hard for several days
- Using a straw
- Carbonated (fizzy) drinks
- Smoking for 3 days for extractions and one week for grafts
- Alcohol for 3 days for extractions and one week for grafts
- Sedatives
- Hot liquids
- Electric toothbrush or vigorous toothbrushing
- Vigorous activity for 48 hours
- Contact sports for one week

8. **Oral Hygiene** will speed healing and reduce odor and infection: One day after surgery, begin rinsing your mouth gently with warm (not hot) salt water. (One rounded teaspoon of salt in a tall glass of warm water.) Allow the salty water to remain in the mouth for 30 seconds. **DO NOT** rinse vigorously. Rinse 4 times daily for 5 days. You may also begin brushing and flossing all your teeth to remove plaque. Please use a fluoride toothpaste. Over-the-counter mouth rinses may be used if diluted in half with water

9. **Discomfort and Pain Medications:** Follow directions on the bottle. Expect 2-3 days of possible discomfort following removal of impacted teeth. Take your over-the-counter ibuprophen (Motrin, Advil, Nuprin), naproxyn (Naprosyn Aleve), aspirin or Tylenol regularly for 3-5 days as recommended. Add in your prescription pain medication as needed. Take your medication before the numbness wears off.

Begin taking your pain medication soon that it has time to take effect prior to the numbing medicine wearing off. Pain medication can cause an upset stomach and nausea, therefore, it is best to take it with food. Any medication which may cause stomach upset and nausea should be taken with a tall hot drink, soft foods and/or antacids. You should rest (minimize movement) when taking narcotic pain medications and call us if vomiting occurs.

Begin your antibiotic medication right away, then continue to follow the directions on the bottle.

Begin the Peridex Rinse tomorrow and continue to rinse for 30 seconds twice daily for 2 weeks

10. **Fever** (under 101°) is usually due to decreased fluid intake, vomiting and dehydration. It usually responds well to increased fluid intake; at least 6-8 large glasses of liquid per day. Fever 102 and above may be a sign of infection and you should notify us immediately.

11. **Please call us** if you experience any of the following:

- Vomiting
- Generalized rash or itch
- Bloody or persistent diarrhea
- Increasing pain or swelling after the 3<sup>rd</sup> day
- Fever greater than 101 degrees
- Foul taste or discharge in the mouth
- If numbness continues for more than 12 hours
- Other surgery-related problems

Thank You,  
Dr. Bob Finkel & Staff