



## ORAL & FACIAL SURGERY SPECIALISTS

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## POST OPERATION INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY

**WOUND CARE** If a gauze pad has been placed over the extraction site bite on it firmly disposing of it when you arrive home. Do not smoke because this will promote bleeding and interfere with healing. Dissolving stitches are used in nearly all cases. These disappear over a period of 2 to 10 days.

**MOUTH CARE** Meticulous oral hygiene is very important & reduces the chances of infection. Although uncomfortable & perhaps difficult initially, do try & brush your teeth right up to & around the teeth adjacent to the wound site. Electric toothbrushes are ideal as they have small rotating heads & long shafts making it easier to reach areas in the back of the mouth. In addition gently rinse the mouth with antibacterial mouth rinse: *Chlorhexidine*.

You may notice a small 'hole' or opening in the gum. This will close after a few weeks. In the interim use the plastic irrigating syringe provided to flush any food particles from these areas. Use either warm salt water or *Chlorhexidine* as the irrigant, placing the tip of the syringe in the hole & squirting.

**DISCOMFORT** Mild discomfort is common after surgery. Start taking your pain medication before the "numbness" of the local anaesthetic wears off & at regular intervals during the first 2 – 3 postoperative days. Do not exceed the recommended dosing.

**DIET** Soft diet with adequate fluids initially with return to normal diet as soon as possible.

**SWELLING** Is a normal response following surgery. It peaks about 48 hours after surgery and lasts for around 5 days. Icepacks may not reduce the degree of swelling but may provide additional comfort in the first 12 hours. Sleeping with your head elevated (best achieved by slipping a pillow under the head of your mattress rather than sleeping directly on 2 pillows) can also help.

**JAW MUSCLE STIFFNESS & LIMITED MOUTH OPENING** This is quite common postoperatively & will settle within 1 – 2 weeks. Regular use of Vaseline or a chap stick to the lips and corners of the mouth will help keep them from becoming sore.

**BLEEDING** Significant bleeding is uncommon following oral surgery. Although the taste of blood in the saliva maybe noticed in the initial 24-hour period avoid vigorous rinsing or spitting & strenuous activity that can promote bleeding. It is common to have some blood ooze from the area of surgery which when mixed with saliva may leave a bloodstain on your pillowcase. If bleeding does occur gently rinse your mouth with cold water to remove any blood clots, fold one sheet of the sterile gauze square into a small square, moisten with hot water, squeeze dry & ensuring it is not too hot to burn the mucosa, bite firmly on it for 30 minutes.

**INFECTION** Postoperative infection is uncommon but if it does occur often presents 3 to 5 days after surgery as increased pain & swelling at the surgical site. Please contact us if this occurs.

A follow up telephone call is usually made by our staff 2 – 3 days after your surgical procedure to ensure that there are no problems, answer any queries you may have & to make a postoperative follow up appointment for 10 – 14 days time if required. There is no charge for the usual postoperative follow up appointment.

### PLEASE CALL US AT THE ROOMS OR YOUR TREATING SURGEON AFTER HOURS IF YOU HAVE:

- Bleeding that cannot be controlled by biting on gauze as per the above instructions
- Increased swelling after the third day post surgery
- Your pain cannot be adequately managed with the prescribed pain medication or your pain fails to settle significantly 3 days post surgery.

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