ROUTINE POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Patients who have undergone I.V. Sedation should be carefully attended by a responsible person for at least four to six hours after leaving the office. The patient is not permitted to drive on the day of the surgery or while taking prescription pain medications.

BLEEDING - When you leave our office, you may have gauze in your mouth. We want you to continue exerting pressure on the gauze until the bleeding subsides. You may change your gauze by replacing it with moist gauze every 30 to 45 minutes as needed. Bleeding follows any surgery and should not alarm you unless it is excessive or persistent. If the bleeding is not subsiding, try repositioning the gauze pack directly over the surgery site. It is normal to experience bleeding for approximately 4 to 6 hours after surgery. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may substitute a moistened tea bag in place of the gauze to help stop the bleeding and encourage blood clot formation. Days following surgery you may experience blood oozing from the surgical site. This is normal and most often seen in the saliva while brushing your teeth.

PAIN - Most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication, and if you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you will be able to manage any discomfort better. If you do not achieve adequate relief, you may supplement each pill with an additional analgesic such as Ibuprofen. Remember that the most discomfort is usually within the first six hours after the anesthetic wears off; after that your need for medicine should lessen. Be sure to continue all medication as directed on the label until finished, unless you develop nausea, vomiting, a skin rash, or diarrhea. If any of these symptoms occur, stop the medications and call our office or the answering service.

SWELLING and DISCOLORATION - These usually do occur following surgery. Swelling is usually the greatest 48 to 72 hours after surgery. It is helpful to keep the head elevated on several pillows the first night after surgery. A cold pack or ice bag wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to face of cheek adjacent to the surgical area should be used. This should be applied thirty minutes on and thirty minutes off during the first 24 to 48 hours after surgery. After 48 hours, no special treatment is required but moist heat may be used if desired.

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**DIET** - After sedation, cool, clear liquids should be the first oral intake. If this is tolerated, the diet may be advanced. Temperature of the food may be warm or cool, but avoid extremely hot temperatures as this can further bleeding. It is sometimes advisable, but not required, to confine the first day’s intake to bland liquids or pureed foods (creamed soups, puddings, yogurt, etc.). It is recommended not to use a straw for several days after the surgery. If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits as much as possible and follow instructions from us or your physician regarding your insulin schedule.

**MOUTH RINSES** - Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Warm water rinses and normal oral care (flossing and brushing) should be adequate. However, salt water rinses can be used if desired. After the first 24 hours, use one-quarter teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solutions, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily for the next five days.

**EXERCISE CARE** - Do not disturb the surgical area the day of surgery. It is not a problem if you get food into an extraction socket following surgery. Do NOT rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects or your fingers. The doctor can clean out the sockets and teach you to do this at home during your post-operative appointment. You may brush your teeth gently. **DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours, since it is very detrimental to healing and a significant cause of dry sockets.

**DRY SOCKETS** - Normal healing after tooth extractions should be as follows: the first two days after surgery is usually the most uncomfortable and there is some degree of swelling and stiffness. When you feel ready you can usually begin a more substantial diet. From the third post-operative day on **GRADUAL, STEADY IMPROVEMENT** should mark the remainder of your post-operative course. If a **DRY SOCKET** occurs (loss of blood clot from the socket, usually on the 4th to 5th post-operative day), there is noticeable, distinct, persistent, throbbing pain in the jaw, often radiating toward the ear and forward along the jaw to cause other teeth to ache. If you do not see steady improvement during the first few days after surgery, don't suffer needlessly. Call the office and report symptoms so you can be seen as soon as possible.

Proper care following oral surgical procedures will hasten recovery and prevent complications. If any unusual symptoms or complications occur, please call our office at once, (979) 764-7101.

Your post-operative examination is scheduled for:

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**It is important that you come at this time.**

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