



# CHATHAM

ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL  
SURGERY

## POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

**\*\*Please read BOTH sides of these instructions carefully!\*\***

Sometimes the after effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt follow these guidelines or call our office for clarification at (912) 354-1515.

### DAY OF SURGERY

**FIRST HOUR:** Bite down gently but firmly on the moist gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not controlled. The packs may be gently removed after one hour. If active bleeding persists, place new, *moist*, gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another hour. The gauze may be discontinued when it is a light pink in color.

**SURGICAL SITE CARE:** Do not disturb the surgical area today. **DO NOT** rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. You may brush your teeth gently. **PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours, since this will slow the healing process and may cause a dry socket.

**PERSISTENT BLEEDING:** Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clinched between the teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may substitute a tea bag (soaked in hot water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) for 20-30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

**SWELLING:** Swelling is often associated with oral surgery and is part of the normal healing process. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery. **DISCONTINUE ICE AFTER 24 HOURS.** Usually the swelling is worse on the third and fourth post-operative day with gradual improvement from that point.

**PAIN:** Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication. **If you take the first pill before the anesthesia has worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort better.** Some patients find that stronger pain medication causes nausea, but if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food, chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medication vary widely among individuals. If you do not achieve adequate relief at first, you may supplement each pain pill with an analgesic such as Advil or Motrin.

Remember that the most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthesia wears off; after that your need for pain medication should lessen. **If you anticipate needing more prescription medication than initially prescribed, you must call for a refill during weekday business hours.**

**NAUSEA:** It is not too uncommon to experience nausea after surgery and can be caused by the prescription pain medication. Be sure something is in your stomach 30 minutes prior to taking the medication to help buffer.

**DIET:** You should be on a substantial diet of liquids, jell-o, applesauce, etc. for the first 24 hours. Beginning the second day, warm foods may be taken, such as; soups, eggs, warm cereal, mashed potatoes, etc. Hot foods should be avoided for 5 days after surgery. It is best to avoid foods, like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc. which may get lodged in the socket area. **Fluids must be strongly encouraged to prevent dehydration. Do not use straws!** Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. **It is important not to skip meals!** 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 or follow instructions given by the doctor.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS

**MOUTH RINSES:** Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use ¼ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily.

**BRUSHING:** Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth as possible. Remember these instructions are used as guidelines for our oral surgery patients. Every patient is unique. Use common sense and if you have questions about your progress, please call the office.

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