

Post-Surgical Instructions

Discomfort and Medications: Periodontal surgery, like other surgical procedures, may be associated with varying degrees of discomfort. This depends on the procedure involved and the individual differences. If analgesics have been prescribed, it is usually best to take the first dose while the surgical site is still anesthetized (numb). All medications should be strictly taken as prescribed. The interval between taking the medications and the total length of time that you are to remain on your medications has been carefully determined to give you the maximum benefit with the minimum use of drugs. Variations from the prescribed regimen can affect healing and the success of your procedures.

Bleeding: You may notice slight bleeding from the surgical site. This type of minor bleeding for one or two days is usually not a major concern. Most problems from bleeding are due to excessive movement of the cheeks and tongue over the surgical site, so try to leave these areas alone. If at any time you notice the formation of large blood clots or an obvious flow of blood, which is more than a slight ooze, notify Dr. Schroer at once.

Swelling: Some slight swelling of the surgical site is not unusual and may begin after surgery. An ice pack may be used to minimize swelling. Ice should be placed in a plastic bag and then wrapped in a thin cloth towel and applied directly over the surgical site. You should maintain the towel wrapped ice pack in contact with the skin as much as possible for the first 24 hours after surgery. This may necessitate the use of several pillows to support your head and upper body while sleeping. If swelling occurs, it usually disappears after several days. Applying moist heat to the areas will help the swelling resolve; however, heat should not be applied until 1-2 days after surgery. Any unusual or large swelling should be reported to Dr. Schroer.

Sutures: Sutures (stitches) are placed to hold the gingival tissue in the proper position for ideal healing. If sutures were placed, your doctor will usually want you to return so that they can be fully removed once sufficient healing has occurred. Do not disturb the sutures with your tongue, toothbrush, or in any other manner since displacement will impair healing. If you notice that a suture has come out or come loose, please contact the office.

Dressing: A periodontal dressing is often used to cover the surgical site for one to two weeks after surgery. The periodontal dressing is placed around your teeth to protect the surgical site and should not be disturbed. If small pieces become lost and you have no discomfort, there is no cause for concern. If large pieces come off, or if the entire dressing becomes loose in the first 2-4 days, please contact the office.

Rinsing: Avoid vigorous rinsing for the first 24 hours following surgery. Cold water held in the mouth for the first 12-24 hours may help reduce slight bleeding. A Chlorhexidine rinse two to

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three times a day will probably be prescribed. The rinse is normally used for 2 weeks following surgery.

Diet: For your comfort and to protect the surgical area, we recommend a soft diet. Avoid chewing in the area of the surgery. Avoid hard or sharp foods (such as corn chips) as these may be uncomfortable and can dislodge the periodontal dressing. Drink plenty of liquids. It is important to maintain a diet with a normal calorie level that is high in protein, minerals, and vitamins to support post-operative healing. Eat as normal a diet as possible. Post surgery is not the time to start a diet, since this can have detrimental effects on healing and lessen the chances of a successful surgery.

Suggested Foods: Mashed potatoes, eggs, soup, Jello, pudding, and yogurt are recommended. If you want to add some texture try macaroni and cheese, spaghetti, soft sandwiches (tuna fish, chicken, or egg salad), or soft fruits and vegetables such as bananas, peas, or cooked tomatoes. Diet supplements (Instant Breakfast) can provide an excellent source of nutrients.

Oral Hygiene: The surgical area should not be disturbed for the first week after surgery. Continue to brush and floss the teeth which were not involved in the surgery (or covered by periodontal dressing). You may rinse gently with salt water (1tsp. salt in a 10 ounce glass of warm water) or with a mouthwash prescribed by your doctor. After the sutures have been removed, generally after one week, you should lightly clean the teeth using a soft toothbrush or as instructed by your doctor. The gentle application of a fluoride gel with your toothbrush will also help control plaque.

Physical Activity: Avoid strenuous physical activity during your immediate recovery period.

Smoking: All smoking should be stopped until after the sutures have been removed to ensure the best healing and the success of your surgical procedure. Healing results are significantly worse in smokers than in non-smokers.

Alcohol: The combination of alcohol and certain pain medications is not recommended.

DO NOTS: For the next several days, do NOT spit, smoke, rinse hard, drink through a straw, create a “sucking” action in your mouth, or use an oral irrigating device.

If you have any questions or problems, please do not hesitate to call the office. If are not feeling significantly better after 4 days, or if you notice swelling beginning to develop, please contact Dr. Schroer.

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