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Post-Surgical Instructions

Follow these instructions if you have had oral surgery:
Tooth/teeth extraction, gum surgery, biopsy, abscess drainage

Proper care and attention on your part will be important factor in your rapid healing. Please follow these instructions to ensure the best results after a dental extraction.

- 1) Discomfort following surgery is normal. The medication should make the pain bearable. Fill your prescription(s) and take the medication with soft food before the numbness wears off. Take medication exactly as prescribed on the bottle. And do not take on an empty stomach. Anesthesia lasts approximately 1 hour. The discomfort may be at its greatest in the first 24 hours. No pain medication refills will be given before 36 hours have elapsed, and then only after a patient re-evaluation by Dr. Hoover.
- 2) Keep the gauze pack in your mouth for at least 30 minutes then change with fresh gauze if bleeding has not stopped. Don't chew on the gauze. The surgery site will continue to "ooze" over the next day or so. To control normal bleeding, damp gauze pads or damp tea bags may be placed over the extraction and firm pressure applied until bleeding slows.
- 3) Swelling is normal, but can be reduced by placing ice packs around the jaw immediately after surgery. Packs should be placed for 10 minutes on your face, then 10 minutes off. Repeat this cycle for up to 8 hours. Keep your head elevated above your heart for the first 24 hours to reduce swelling. Use a heating pad if swelling persists starting 24 hours after surgery.
- 4) Mouth care. For the first day, do not rinse, spit, suck through a straw, brush/floss the surgical area or flush out your mouth. If you do, you will dislodge the blood clot that naturally forms and causes "dry socket".
- 5) Starting tomorrow, you must begin rinsing your mouth gently with lukewarm salt water. (1 teaspoon salt in 8 oz. lukewarm water) Continue salt water rinses for several days. The cleaner you keep your teeth and gums, the less chance of infection. Rinse your mouth at least 3 to 4 times each day, and especially after you eat something. Remember, **do not spit**.
- 6) Nutrition and Exercise. Try to eat on the opposite side of the surgery. Eat softer foods for a few days. If you find eating your regular diet is too difficult, supplement your diet with liquids, such as Carnation Instant Breakfast or Ensure. Remember that proper healing requires nutritious food, plenty of water and rest. Avoid vigorous exercise for at least 3 days.
- 7) Smoking. Do not smoke for at least 1 week. Smoking will cause "dry socket".
- 8) Take all medication as prescribed, especially antibiotics. If you are taking oral contraceptives, use an alternative source of birth control when taking antibiotics that are known to decrease the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.
- 9) If complications occur call us or visit our office.