**General Surgery Post Operative Care**

Bleeding

Bleeding after surgery may continue for several hours. The best way to stop bleeding is to place folded, damp gauze over the extraction site, and gently bite for 30-60 minutes. Rest quietly with your head elevated. If bleeding continues, use gauze for an additional 30 minutes. Bleeding should always be evaluated by looking directly at the surgical site. Pink or blood-tinged saliva may be seen for 2-3 days following the surgery and does not indicate a problem.

Swelling

Swelling is the body’s normal reaction to surgery and healing. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its peak for 2-3 days. After this time, the swelling should decrease, but may persist for 7-10 days.

Swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. During the first 24 hours, apply the ice packs to the outside of the face 20 minutes on and then 20 minutes off, while awake.

Pain

Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. Postoperative discomfort will be managed with an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory such as Ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil).

Discomfort should subside daily. If not, please call our office.

Dry Sockets

If a dry socket occurs (loss of blood clot from socket) there is constant pain that may radiate to other areas including ear, jaw, and teeth. Symptoms of a dry socket do not occur until the 3rd to 4th day, postoperative. If you do not have improvement during the first few days following the procedure, call the office. A medicated dressing may be placed if medications do not resolve the discomfort.

To help prevent a dry socket avoid vigorous rinsing, sucking on the wound, spitting, using a straw, smoking, and exercising for 2-3 days after procedure. You may gently rinse your mouth with a dilute mouth rinse of your choice, after one day.

Diet

After General anesthetic or conscious sedation, start with liquids. While numb, patients should avoid hot liquids or foods. Patients may have applesauce, pudding, or Jell-O. Once numbness wears off, patients can progress to solid foods, chewing away from the surgical sites. Patients should avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket areas.

**Fainting precaution**: If you suddenly sit or stand from a lying position you may become dizzy, especially if you have not eaten or have had limited fluids. Therefore, if you are lying down immediately following surgery, make sure to sit for at least one full minute before standing.

Oral Hygiene

The best way to prevent infection and ensure healing is to keep your mouth clean. Clean your mouth thoroughly after each meal beginning the day after surgery. Use a soft bristle toothbrush and toothpaste after meals and at bedtime. Should bleeding resume after brushing, repeat the use of gauze as described above. Do not rinse your mouth the day of surgery.

Activity

For the first 48 hours you should rest and relax with no physical activity. After 48 hours, you may resume activity as tolerated.

Healing

Bad breath is common and will disappear as healing occurs. Two to three days following surgery, white, possible hard tissue may be seen in the surgical site. This signifies normal, healing tissue. Complete healing of the extraction site may take 6-8 weeks.

Sutures/Stitches

Sutures will resorb or fall out on their own. If you have received sutures avoid playing with them. After surgery, a two week follow up appointment will be scheduled to check healing and remove sutures.

Antibiotics

If an antibiotic is prescribed, take the tablets or liquid as directed. Take the entire prescription until gone. Antibiotics can be given to help prevent infection. Make sure to call the office if a rash or other unfavorable reaction occurs. You may also be prescribed a steroidal medication, which you would start the morning or the surgery and finish over the next two mornings as directed.

***Foods to Drink and Eat While Numb***

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| **Drink:*** Water
* Juice
* Ice Chips
* Popsicles
 | **Eat:*** Applesauce
* Jell-O
* Pudding
* Yogurt
* Milkshake/ Smoothie (no straw)
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***Soft Foods When Numbness is Gone***

* Mashed Potatoes
* Pasta
* Eggs
* Pancakes
* Soups (be careful-not too hot)
* Chicken you can cut with a fork