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POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

POST OPERATIVE HEALING CAN TAKE SEVERAL DAYS. SWELLING, DISCOMFORT, REDUCED FUNCTION, AND MILD BLEEDING ARE ALL EXPECTED CONSEQUENCES OF SURGERY. PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY TO MINIMIZE THESE ISSUES AND SPEED YOUR RECOVERY.

Bleeding control

- Some bleeding is to be expected after surgery. This is normal for 24-48 hours.
- Applying pressure by firmly biting on the gauze placed directly over the wound(s) is the best way to control bleeding.
- Bite constantly on the same gauze for one hour before changing it.
- Blood-tinged saliva may make the bleeding appear to be more than it is.
- If you run out of gauze, or bleeding persists, moisten a tea bag and place it directly over the wound, holding pressure by biting firmly for 30 minutes. You may repeat this as often as necessary. The tannic acid found in non-herbal tea promotes clotting.
- Remember to put an old towel down over anything you rest your head on to prevent blood stains.
- Do not spit, rinse aggressively, or use a straw for the first 5 days.
- Do not smoke for the first 5 days as it can increase bleeding and delay healing.
- If the bleeding seems excessive or persistent, please contact our office.

Pain control

- If you have been prescribed medication, take it as directed on the package.
- If you are using over-the-counter medication:
 - Ibuprofen 400mg or 600mg taken every 6 hours is very effective at relieving pain and minimizing swelling.
 - Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 1,000mg taken every 8 hours can be used with the ibuprofen to treat more severe pain.
- Remember to take your pain medication with food or a large glass of water.
- If you develop hives or a rash stop all medication and contact our office immediately.
- If the pain seems excessive or is poorly controlled by the medications you have please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Swelling control

- **Ice:** One of the most effective ways to reduce swelling is to apply ice during the first 12 hours after surgery. Apply the ice (frozen peas work well) for 20 minutes ON and 20 minutes OFF. After 48 hours, discontinue using the ice.

- **Elevation:** Try to keep your head elevated above the level of your heart at all times (including sleeping). This will reduce the amount of swelling and discomfort you experience.
- Remember, swelling is a normal part of inflammation and healing. It tends to reach a peak on the third day after surgery.
- If you are concerned about your swelling, or if it persists beyond four days please contact our office.

Diet

- A soft diet is advisable for the first three days after surgery.
- Please do not eat or drink hot foods on the day of surgery – it encourages bleeding and can potentially burn you if parts of your mouth are still numb.
- If your appetite is reduced, be sure to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids.
- When you are ready to resume your normal diet try to avoid anything that causes you discomfort. Also try to avoid foods with seeds, nuts, popcorn, etc.

Nausea

- Nausea is a troubling problem after oral surgery and can be common for some patients after intravenous anesthesia.
- Swallowing blood causes nausea.
- If you are nauseated, try drinking a small amount of flat Coca-cola or ginger ale every few hours.
- If you are unable to keep food or fluids down or nausea persists for more than 24 hours contact our office for assistance.

Activity

- Do not engage in any activity that elevates your heart rate for 5 days after surgery.
- Get plenty of rest during the day and try to get extra sleep at night.
- Otherwise, normal activities should be resumed as soon as possible.

Oral Hygiene

- Rinse your mouth gently with warm salt water (1tsp salt in an 8oz cup of warm water) after each meal or snack.
- Start brushing your teeth on the evening of surgery, gently using a soft toothbrush. Let comfort be your guide. Be gentle near the wounds.
- Try not to use strong mouth rinses, especially those containing alcohol as this can delay wound healing.
- Do NOT directly irrigate the wound(s) until directed by your surgeon and please only use the syringe provided.

Please call Monterey Peninsula Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery at 831-718-8140 if you have any questions or concerns following your surgery.