

## **Post-Operative Instructions following Minor Oral Surgery**

Our goal is for your healing process after minor oral surgery to be as comfortable as possible. Please follow all instructions carefully to avoid any unnecessary pain and possible infection.

### **Immediately Following Surgery**

- Take pain killers as soon as possible (e.g. paracetamol, ibuprofen etc.) Do not wait for the local anaesthetic to wear off.

For mild pain use Paracetamol regularly until the pain subsides - for approximately 2-3 days (DO NOT EXCEED THE MAXIMUM DOSAGE). For moderate pain use Ibuprofen/Nurofen 400mg every 6-8 hours for 3-5 days. Sometimes for more severe pain you may require a combination of Paracetamol and Ibuprofen.

- Do not suck on a straw, spit or smoke.
- Restrict your activities the day of surgery and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable.
- Vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the affected area following surgery should be avoided. This may initiate bleeding caused by dislodging the blood clot that has formed. Do not rinse your mouth vigorously on the first post-operative day or while there is bleeding.
- Restrict your diet to liquids and soft foods which are comfortable for you to eat.

**Bleeding:** A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following a surgical procedure. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Bleeding is best controlled by the use of pressure. Excessive bleeding may be controlled by placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for 20-30 minutes. Repeat if necessary. DO NOT SPIT. Swallow your saliva.

**Swelling:** The amount of swelling that is normally expected after the procedure depends on the type of surgery. Swelling around the mouth, cheek, eyes and side of the face is not uncommon. The swelling sometimes may not appear immediately, and it may occur up to 2-3 days post-surgery. You can help to minimize the swelling by applying ice packs to the affected area. For the first 3 hours, apply the ice packs directly to the area, alternating on for 20 minutes then off for 20 minutes. Applying ice packs after 24 hours has no beneficial effect. If swelling or jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm. Swelling may take up to 2 weeks to resolve completely.

**Pain:** Post-operative pain will be most severe the first day after surgery. It is beneficial to take your pain medication before your numbness wears off. For moderate pain, 400mg of Ibuprofen/Nurofen may be taken every 6-8 hours. DO NOT take the pain medication on an empty stomach as nausea may result. Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside more and more each day.

**Antibiotics:** If you have been prescribed antibiotics, take the medicine as directed. Antibiotics may be prescribed to help prevent infection. Discontinue antibiotic use in the

event of a rash or other unfavourable reaction. PLEASE NOTE: If you are currently taking birth control pills, they may be inactivated by the antibiotic.

**Sutures:** If any sutures were required, they will dissolve on their own in 7-21 days. It will not be necessary to return to the surgery for sutures to be removed.

**Activity:** Over exertion may start or intensify your pain. AVOID excessive work or play. It is not necessary to stay indoors following uncomplicated surgery. However, rest and minimal activity will help to minimize pain, swelling and bleeding. Normal activity may be resumed the following day as tolerated.

**Cleaning:** Do not rinse or spit vigorously for the first 24 hours following surgery. You can brush your teeth the night of the surgery, but rinse gently. The day after surgery, you should begin rinsing your mouth four times a day for a minimum of 5-7 days. Do this gently as to not dislodge the blood clot. To rinse, mix a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water. Clean the rest of your mouth as usual.

**Diet:** It is advisable to eat only soft, non-spicy food for the first few days following surgery. AVOID hot food or liquid that could agitate the already inflamed area.

**Special Considerations:** Trismus (stiffness) in the face muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a period of days and rarely for a few weeks. Moist heat compresses can minimize this condition. You may experience aching from other teeth. This discomfort is caused by referred pain and is a temporary condition. It is not unusual to develop bruising in the area of the extraction. There may be a slight elevation in temperature for 24-48 hours.

**Dry socket:** A 'dry socket' is the loss of the blood clot in the socket. This condition creates a delayed healing at the extraction site and presents symptoms such as pain in the ear, chin, adjacent teeth and jaw. The discomfort usually begins about the third or fourth day after surgery and can last for many days. The cause of a dry socket is unknown but it can be attributed to pre-existing infection, the difficulty of the surgery, increased age, medications (such as birth control pills) and smoking. Treatment is for the symptoms only.