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Oral Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

Please keep in mind that you have just had oral surgery! Be kind to yourself! The initial healing period typically takes from one to two weeks, gum tissue takes about 3-4 weeks to heal, and complete healing of the bone can take about 6-8 months depending on your care of this area. Some discomfort, bleeding and swelling should be expected in the next 24 hours as your mouth heals. Following these simple instructions will normally be all that is needed.

1. **Do Not Disturb The Wound:** In doing so you may invite irritation, infection and/or bleeding. The healing process begins immediately after surgery as your body sends blood to nourish the tooth socket. Complete healing will take approximately 1-2 weeks and swelling may last 48 hours. Simple pressure from a piece of gauze is usually all that is needed to control the bleeding and to help a blood clot form in the socket. Keep your fingers and tongue away from this area. Do not create any positive or negative pressure in your mouth. (Positive pressure would be like trying to blow up a balloon, and negative pressure would be created if you tried to drink from a straw.) Blowing your nose or sneezing violently can dislodge the blood clot and impair healing. So, if you have an upper respiratory infection or allergies please remember to take the appropriate medications to treat these conditions.

2. **Do Not Smoke, Use Tobacco Products Or Alcohol:** Avoid tobacco and alcohol for 72 hours after your surgery. These substances will interfere with the healing processes and may promote bleeding, leading to a very painful situation know as “dry socket.” Continuing to smoke during these first few days after your surgery WILL slow the healing of the soft tissue. The soft tissue will therefore take longer to fill in the socket and protect the blood clot that is promoting bone healing.
3. **Brushing:** For several days after the extraction it is important to keep the area as clean as possible to prevent infection and to promote healing. Do not directly brush the oral surgery site for the first 3-4 days to prevent dislodging the blood clot from the socket. Don't use any toothpaste. Rinsing toothpaste from your mouth could remove the blood clot. Instead this area can be gently wiped with a clean wet gauze. After this time, you may carefully brush your teeth around this area and floss gently.
4. **Mouthwash:** Avoid all rinsing for 24 hours after the surgery. This is to ensure the formation of a good blood clot. After the first 24 hours you should VERY GENTLY rinse this area 4 times per day using warm salt water. (1 tablespoon of salt in 8oz of warm water.) Rinse very gently after every meal and snack, making sure that the water reaches the extraction site. Rinsing removes food particles and debris from the socket to help promote healing. Some patients may be instructed to use a Chlorhexadine rinse two times a day for 10 days after the first 24 hours has passed.
5. **Do Not Spit Or Suck Through A Straw:** This will disrupt the blood clot and may promote bleeding.
6. **Bleeding:** When you leave the office you will be given verbal instructions regarding the control of postoperative bleeding. A gauze will be placed on the extraction site, and it is best to keep firm pressure on this gauze, changing it every 30-40 minutes. The gauze should be dampened before placing them over the surgical site to avoid the blood clot from attaching to the gauze. You will probably only need to change the gauze 3-4 times. It is normal for some blood to ooze from the area of surgery for 12 hours. If bleeding seems too heavy or persistent then bite firmly onto a moistened teabag for 30

minutes. Tea contains Tannic Acid which will help to reduce the bleeding. Heavy bleeding that is saturating a gauze after 4 hours should be reported to Drs. Klein and Klein. Use a towel on your pillow the first night to catch any oozing.

7. **Medications:** Prescription medications may be used after certain oral surgery procedures. If you are given a prescription medication, directions for this medication will have been given to you after your appointment. Most post oral surgery discomfort can be controlled very effectively with over the counter Tylenol and Motrin. You may take 800 mg of Motrin every 8 hours and 1000 mg of Tylenol every 6 hours. Taking these two medications in this way after surgery has been documented to provide better pain relief than almost all prescribed narcotics. Please AVOID ASPIRIN. Aspirin can cause increased bleeding by inhibiting the blood clotting mechanism. Most of the time antibiotics are not indicated after oral surgery.
8. **Swelling:** To prevent swelling apply and ice pack or cold towel to the outside of the face in the area of the surgery during the first 12-24 hours. Apply alternately, 10-12 minutes on, then 10-12 minutes off. During the first 24 hours, ice is the best restriction to excessive swelling. After 24 hours warm salt water rinsing will help.
9. **Sore Jaw Joint:** Your jaw may be sore from holding your mouth open during surgery. This may last 4-5 days. Massage the jaw muscles gently and apply moist heat for 10 minutes on and then 10 minutes off. Eat soft foods. Do not over extend the opening of your mouth it can further aggravate this area.
10. **Numbness:** When a local anesthetic is used your lip, tongue and cheek will be numb for 4-12 hours after the procedure. During this period you must be very careful not to bite, chew, scratch or pinch this area which can lead to serious soft tissue trauma. There may be some semi-permanent numbing in the area of the extraction. It will decrease in size within the first 6-8 weeks and may even take as long as 6 months to completely return to normal.
11. **Diet:** For the first 24-48 hours, you should maintain a diet of soft foods, such as Jell-O, pudding, yogurt, cream-of-wheat, mashed potatoes, clear soup etc. Foods that crumble such as potato chips, popcorn, crackers, cookies etc. should be avoided. Hot and spicy

foods should also be avoided to prevent irritation and burns of the extraction site. Please avoid carbonated and hot beverages for 3-4 days. Avoid sticky foods like caramel. Eating immediately following the procedure is not recommended. When the numbness has worn off you may eat yet be sure to chew on the opposite side for the first 24 hours in order to keep food away from the extraction site. It is important to drink 8 glasses of fluids each day! Try vegetable and or fruit juices or high-protein drinks. Cut food into small pieces to ease chewing. Return to a normal diet as tolerated.

12. **Activity:** For the first 24 hours, your activity should be limited because increased activity can lead to increased bleeding. Please avoid bending over or heavy lifting for 2-3 days. To avoid barotraumas, do not fly on airplanes or go recreational diving for up to a month after your surgery.
13. **Pain:** Pain that lasts up to a week or so but is gradually improving should be considered typical. Pain that seems to be getting worse after two days should be considered abnormal and will require a follow-up visit. After the first 24 hours salt water rinses and applications of moist heat on the area may help with pain.
14. **Long Term Considerations:** Having a missing tooth can lead to several problems such as shifting teeth, difficulty chewing, and malocclusion which can even lead to TMJ problems. This area will need to be restored with a fixed bridge, implant, a removable partial or a denture to insure good long-term dental health.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these instructions, your surgery, or your healing process DO NOT hesitate to call our office! Drs. Klein and Klein's cell phone number is always on the recording if it is after hours.

Take Care of Yourself!

Drs. Aric and Amy Klein