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## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING DENTAL ANESTHESIA/SURGERY**

**\*\*The best and most comprehensive post-op instructions are on our website at [www.jltdds.com](http://www.jltdds.com)\*\***

### **THINGS TO EXPECT:**

- Bleeding:** Mild bleeding or "oozing" is normal for the first 12 to 24 hours following surgery.
- Swelling:** This swelling is normal following a surgical procedure. It should reach its maximum on post-op days 3 and 4 and should begin to diminish by the sixth post-op day, gradually decreasing each day thereafter.
- Discomfort:** Significant discomfort may occur for a few hours after the sensation returns to your mouth. Then, it may gradually increase again on post-op days 3 and 4 and should then diminish on day 6 and on each day thereafter.

### **THINGS TO DO IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY:**

- Bleeding:** Place gauze over extraction sites and maintain pressure by biting until the bleeding has stopped. Repeat as needed. Keep head elevated, and rest. Do not suck or spit excessively. Also, please refrain from blowing into musical instruments. See post-op videos for further instructions on how to stop bleeding.  
**NOTE:** Some "oozing" and discoloration of saliva is normal. If bleeding persists, replace the gauze with a clean, folded gauze placed over the extraction site, and maintain the pressure until the bleeding stops.
- Swelling:** Place ice or cold compresses on the region of surgery for ten minutes every half-hour for the first 8-12 hours.  
**NOTE:** Ice bags or cold compresses should be used only on the day of surgery.
- Smoking:** Avoid smoking during the healing period, as smoking will make the pain much worse.
- Discomfort:** Take medications as directed for **PAIN**. Mild-to-moderate pain can be relieved by non-prescription Advil or Aleve. For more severe pain, take the prescription pain medication as directed. Remember that these medications can take up to 30 minutes to one hour to take effect. If you are using any of these medications for the first time, exercise caution with the initial doses (start with ½ a pill).
- Diet:** A nutritious liquid diet, or a diet of foods that easily dissolve, will be ideal for the first weeks after surgery. Healing will occur in weekly increments; therefore, it is best to gradually (in weekly increments) return the diet and/or other mouth/oral activities back to normal. The number one reason for increased pain and swelling is having food stuck in the sockets.
- Physical Activity:** For the first 24 to 48 hours, one should **REST**. Patients who have sedation should refrain from driving an automobile or from engaging in any task that requires alertness for the next 24 hours.

### **THE DAYS AFTER SURGERY:**

1. Brush teeth carefully.
2. Beginning 24 hours after the surgery, rinse mouth with **WARM SALT WATER** (or prescription mouth rinse). Continue rinsing three-to-five times per day for seven days, then begin irrigating per dentist's instructions (see #7 below).
3. If **ANTIBIOTICS** are prescribed, be **SURE** to take **ALL** that have been prescribed, **AS DIRECTED** (unless you are experiencing any adverse side effects).
4. Use **WARM, MOIST HEAT** on face for swelling, if any. Continue until the swelling subsides. A warm, wet washcloth or heating pad will suffice.
5. If **SUTURES** were used, they will dissolve on their own.
6. **DRY SOCKET** is a delayed healing response, which may occur during the second to fourth post-operative day. It is associated with a throbbing pain on the side of the face, which may seem to be directed up toward the ear. In mild cases, simply increasing the pain medication can control the symptoms. If this is unsuccessful, please call Dr. Thornton.
7. **RETURN TO YOUR DENTIST'S OFFICE** five-to-seven days after the surgery for irrigation instructions.
8. Additional post-operative information can be found at [www.jltdds.com](http://www.jltdds.com).

### **CONTACT THE DOCTOR IF:**

1. Bleeding is excessive and cannot be controlled.
2. Discomfort is poorly controlled.
3. Swelling is excessive, spreading, or continuing to enlarge after 60 hours.
4. Allergic reactions to medications occur, which are causing a generalized rash or excessive itching.

**Call 911 immediately if the patient has trouble breathing, becomes unresponsive, or is difficult to awaken. After calling 911, call Dr. Thornton at 409.651.9860 ASAP.**