



ANDREW W. MAPLES, DMD
BRIAN W. MAPLES, DMD

POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS

Following any surgical procedure, the last thing you want to worry about is a complication due to poor post-operative care. We find that post-operative plans work best when they are conveniently woven into a patient's life in a way that helps you concentrate on healing. This guide will outline the healing process and review normal post-surgical symptoms. It will also provide information regarding advice, treatments, and habits that will expedite your healing. Please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions regarding your healing process, but we hope that this guide will be beneficial to you as you recover from your surgical procedure.

Post-Operative Care and Instructions

First and foremost, after any surgical procedure, do not disturb the wound. This means avoiding any rinsing, spitting, suction, or touching of the wound. Your doctor may even advise you to avoid nose-blowing, sneezing, or coughing in certain cases (so use sinus or allergy medication if necessary).

Bleeding: Keep steady pressure over the surgical site following the procedure. Pressure helps reduce bleeding and permits the formation of a clot. Gently remove the compress after one hour. If bleeding persists, place another compress and again keep steady pressure on the area for an additional hour. A moistened tea bag applied to the site for 30 minutes may also help to stop bleeding. Blood and saliva mix in the mouth and make it look like there is more blood than there really is. Some oozing is normal and the site may ooze for as long as 48 hours. If bleeding continues, we recommend that you contact our office for further instructions.

Swelling: Any swelling can be minimized by applying an icepack, on the cheek or on the jaw directly, in the area of surgery. If an icepack is unavailable, a heavy plastic bag filled with crushed ice or a frozen bag of peas make wonderful icepacks and can be refrozen and used repeatedly. Immediately following the procedure, it is advisable to apply the icepack over the affected area – 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off – for two to four hours. This will help prevent the development of excessive swelling and discomfort. Apply the ice as often as necessary for the first 24 hours ONLY. After the first 24 hours, a warm compress is advised. You may expect swelling for up to 10 days and possibly a fever of 99-100 degrees.

Pain: It is normal to experience some discomfort for several days after surgery. To minimize any discomfort from post-operative pain, begin taking medication as directed by your doctor before the anesthesia wears off and feeling has returned to normal.

For mild to moderate pain, over-the-counter Tylenol and/or Ibuprofen seems to be very effective when taken as directed. 2-3 tablets may be taken every three to four hours as needed.

For severe pain, the prescribed medication should be taken as directed. Take the prescribed narcotic medication if you experience significant pain.

Note – Do not take any of the above medications if you are allergic or have been instructed by your doctor not to take it.

Smoking/Tobacco Products: Do not smoke or use any tobacco product for AT LEAST five days after surgery.

Smoking will delay the healing process and will significantly increase your risk for dry socket.

Ongoing Oral Hygiene: Good oral hygiene is essential to good healing. This includes warm salt water rinses (a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water) at least four to five times a day. These warm salt water rinses should begin 24 hours after surgery – this will minimize your chance of disturbing the blood clot. Repeat this rinse after every meal or snack for one week. Rinsing is important because it removes food particles and debris, which will help promote healing.

Resume brushing and flossing, but clean gently around the site for about one week. Do not use any mouthrinse for at least 72 hours after surgery unless instructed otherwise by your doctor. You can also brush your tongue with a dry toothbrush to keep bacteria growth down, but be careful not to touch the surgical site.

Diet: Eating might seem like the last thing on your mind after dental surgery, but it is still important to nourish your body. Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid hot liquids or food. Soft, cool foods and liquids should be consumed on the day of surgery. You should gradually return to a normal diet over the course of two weeks. Have your meals at the usual time. Eat soft, nutritious foods, and drink liquids regularly and often (both during and between meals). For two weeks after surgery, DO NOT eat or drink: spicy foods, acidic juices, chips, popcorn, or carbonated drinks.

Activity: It is best to keep physical activities to a minimum immediately following surgery. Rest up and heal – otherwise you could be setting your recovery back by a few days. If you engage in vigorous exercise, throbbing or bleeding at the surgical site may occur. If this happens, you should discontinue exercising. Keep in mind that you are probably not taking in the normal amount of calories for normal exercise.

When To Call Us: It is normal to experience some discomfort for several days after a surgical procedure, but call us immediately if you experience: heavy or increased bleeding, pain or swelling that increases or continues beyond three days, a reaction to the medication. For implant procedures, please call us if the implants gradually show through the gums so we can check them. You may also call us with any questions or concerns you have after your surgery. Our office phone number is (904)731-0311.

Post-Op Care Review

1) Don't Touch! Keep fingers and tongue away from the surgical area.

2) Cool It! Use ice packs on surgical area (side of face) for the first 12 hours. Apply ice 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off.

3) Rinse! We recommend that you use warm, salt water rinses 3 times/day for 3-5 days starting 24 hours after surgery.

4) Still Hurts? For mild discomfort, take tylenol and/or ibuprofen as directed every 4-6 hours.

5) In Pain? For more intense pain, please use the prescription medication for pain given to you.

6) Hydrate Yourself. Drink plenty of fluids – Gatorade, smoothie, and milkshakes are great! Do not use a straw for 7 days.

7) Chew Gum. If the muscles of the jaw become stiff, chewing gum at intervals will help relax the muscles. The use of warm, moist heat on the outside of your face beginning on the second day after surgery will further help with relaxation of the muscles.

8) Eat Soft, Room Temperature/Cool Foods. Diet may consist of soft foods, which can be easily chewed and swallowed. Soup, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, and scrambled eggs are great – but not piping hot! No seeds, chips, nuts, rice, or popcorn! We also suggest you stay away from spicy foods initially.

9) Blood? A certain amount of bleeding can be expected following surgery. Bleeding is controlled by applying pressure to the surgical area for 45-90 minutes. When controlled, you may eat or drink. If bleeding persists, a moist tea bag should be held firmly on the area of bleeding for one hour straight.

10) No Smoking, Please! Do NOT smoke for at least 5 (preferably 7) days after surgery. It may be a good time to consider quitting.

11) Drugs? If you are on other medications, be sure to discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist to minimize adverse drug interactions. Please start taking a multi-vitamin, however, if you are not already doing so.