



## HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AFTER ORAL SURGERY

### Important Instructions Summary:

- 24 hours Rest is recommended if possible.
- Use damp gauze and direct pressure for 20 minutes at a time to control bleeding.
- Take medications as prescribed and continue with other prescribed medications.
- **NO SMOKING**, no using straws, or vigorous rinsing.
- Use cold packs and warm compresses as needed.
- Use warm salt water rinses to soothe and disinfect the area after 24 hours.
- Brush your teeth normally, but avoid the surgical area.
- Avoid crunchy or sharp foods, popcorn, and food with seeds for 2 weeks.
- Do not use anything other than a gentle rinse to get food or debris out of the open socket.
- Do not hesitate to call with any problems or concerns.
- **Call The Office** if pain or swelling gets worse after 3 days: **(509) 982-2605**

### First 24 hours after Surgery

**Plan on resting** at home following oral surgery to help start your recovery. You should limit strenuous activity for the first 24 hours and avoid increasing your blood pressure which can cause throbbing or bleeding. We can write a note for you for work or school if necessary. Immediately after your appointment, get your prescriptions filled and begin taking your medications. Taking your first dose of pain reliever before the local anesthetic wears off is important to avoid experiencing stronger pain following surgery. Use pillows or a reclining chair to keep your head elevated 45 degrees for the first 2 days to help control any swelling.

A small amount of **bleeding or oozing is normal for up to 36 hours** and can take longer in some cases. Previous infection in the area, some medical conditions, and taking medications such as blood thinners/anticoagulants, daily aspirin or anti-inflammatories can increase bleeding times. **Continue taking all of your prescribed medications** unless specifically told not to do so by your physician. If you are experiencing bleeding following your surgery, use direct pressure with damp gauze to stop it. Gauze packs will be in place when you leave the office and you should keep continual pressure on those packs for at least 20 minutes. After taking out the gauze, if bleeding does not resume, there is no need to re-pack. Expect oozing of blood to continue on and off for the next day or so. You may need to place another pack of gauze and hold pressure several times throughout the day before it is no longer necessary. **You must make the the gauze damp** before putting it over the bleeding site to prevent the gauze from sticking. If bleeding continues over several hours with swallowable amounts of blood and/or does not respond to direct pressure please call us for instructions. Please don't swallow any accumulating blood as this will cause nausea. Moist tea bags can be used instead of gauze to help stop difficult bleeding. Hold with pressure over the site as you would with the gauze for thirty minutes. **Ice Packs** are a good way to reduce pain and swelling during the first 24 hours. Remember not to leave on for more than 5 minutes at a time. Wait until the second day to begin using heat. **Do not smoke.** Do not use straws. Avoid any suction in the mouth. **Do not try to physically dislodge any food that may have gotten into the socket.** Don't put your finger, or any other object on or around the surgery site; you could disrupt the healing tissue or introduce harmful bacteria to the area. A **soft diet** is recommended for the first day following dental surgery. Cooked cereals, soft scrambled eggs, puddings, and similar foods can be used. Boost, Ensure and SlimFast are great products for nutrition when eating solid food is not possible. (No straws please)



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### Continuing Care

**The surgical area will heal over the next 7-14 days.** Usually the majority of post operative symptoms or pain are experienced in the first couple of days following surgery. You should be improving steadily after the first 36 hours. If there is any increase in pain or swelling after three days this is an indication that something is not right and you should call the office right away.

Care should be taken in the first days after the surgery to prevent complications with healing. **DO NOT SMOKE, and Avoid any suction in the mouth to prevent a 'dry socket', a very painful condition.** We advise you not to spit, rinse vigorously, use straws, or smoke anything for the first five days. In general, you should not do anything that could damage or dislodge the blood clot that sets up in the socket(s).

Beginning 24 hrs after your dental surgery you should start using **warm salt water rinses** to keep the area clean and help with healing. To make the rinse, add about a teaspoon of salt to a half glass of warm water. It should be about as salty as the ocean. Let the salt water roll around your mouth and then drool it out into the sink. Do not swish, or forcefully spit the water out. Do this at least three times a day, but it can be done more often as needed. Please don't use commercially available mouthwash for two weeks, or until healed. Do brush and floss your teeth normally, just keep the bristles away from the healing area. Be gentle, and be careful not to rinse aggressively or spit forcefully.

You can also begin using **hot compresses** after 24 hours to help disperse swelling. You can microwave a moist washcloth to create a hot pad. Hot or cold treatments should not stay on for longer than 5 minutes at a time, and do not fall asleep with a hot or cold pack. Getting some rest, and using hot and cold treatments is a good way to help control pain and reduce the need for pain medication. Narcotic pain medication can be avoided in most cases and is to be used only as necessary.

**Sutures** may have been placed after surgery, and in almost all cases they will be dissolvable. Typically they will loosen and fall out after a few days. There is usually no problem if they come out early. If you still have any remaining sutures after 10 days please call the office so they can be removed. If non-dissolvable sutures were used, then you will have an appointment to have them removed in a week or so.

You may begin to introduce more solid foods if possible after 24 hours. As your ability to eat normal food improves, be careful to chew on the other side of the mouth or away from the healing area. **Continue to avoid crunchy foods such as chips, popcorn and food with seeds for two weeks.**

### Taking Your Medications

You may have been prescribed Ibuprofen (Motrin) or Hydrocodone/APAP (Vicodin) medication for dental pain. If possible, take your first pain pill while you're still numb. **For Severe Pain** you may take both of these medications together if they were prescribed to you. Start with Ibuprofen, and if needed you can take the narcotic after an hour for added relief. **Do Not Exceed the doses prescribed to you, and Don't Mix with Alcohol.** For mild to moderate pain, Ibuprofen or Tylenol alone may be all that is necessary. Please contact your local pharmacy for instructions on how to dispose of unused narcotic medications.



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### Taking Your Medications (cont.)

**Antibiotics** may be prescribed to you to control any infection. It is very important to finish the entire prescription of any antibiotic(s) that you are taking. Please call us if there are any problems with your medication so that we can change your prescription. **Common side effects from medications** may include allergy, diarrhea, stomach pain, etc. Be sure to read all safety information inserts provided to you by the pharmacist. Severe allergic reactions can become life threatening. Hives, or blotchy areas on the skin, are often the first sign of allergy. **If you develop wheezing, difficulty swallowing, or trouble breathing go to the ER immediately.** If you or your child are taking a medication for the first time be alert for possible reactions. If you have any problems taking any of the medications that have been prescribed to you, stop taking the medication, and notify the office immediately at (509) 982-2605 or **call 911 in case of medical emergency.**

### Problems healing

**Dry socket and post operative infections** are the most common complications following oral surgery. To help prevent these problems please take your medications as prescribed, follow the instructions above closely, and do not smoke. Dry socket, or alveolar osteitis, is caused by losing all or part of the blood clot in the socket. As the name implies, uncovered bone is now exposed within the 'dry' socket and extreme pain is the result. Unfortunately the bone will not form a new clot on its own if the existing one is damaged, so take care not to disturb the blood clot. **Smoking directly causes dry socket.** Any suction in mouth or physical disruption of the clot could also cause it. Post Operative infection is a potentially serious problem and is not uncommon in oral surgeries. If you suspect you have an infection you should contact us as soon as possible. **Call the office if you are experiencing pain or swelling that is getting worse, or not improving, after three days following your procedure.**

There can be other unexpected pain or tenderness following surgery. Bone spurs, Pain or stiffness in the jaw joint, tenderness in nearby teeth, or numbness in the area are sometimes reported after surgeries. These issues will almost always resolve on their own within a few weeks, but we need to hear from you if you are experiencing any of these concerns.

**Please keep these instructions for reference until you are fully recovered** and please share them with those involved in your care. Thank you for choosing Odessa Dental for your dental treatment needs.

**Call Us Anytime with any Questions or Concerns at (509) 982-2605**

