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POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

The following instructions are provided to make your postoperative recovery period as short and pleasant as possible.

PATIENT NAME:

POST-OP APPOINTMENT DATE:

BLEEDING

- Bite on gauze (do not chew) for the first hour after surgery. Remove and replace gently on an hourly basis.
- Repeat process with fresh gauze as needed until bleeding has diminished to a slow “oozing” or stops altogether. When the gauze is more white than red in color, you may remove it and cease use.
- Place the gauze directly over the surgical sites to be effective.
- Do not rinse or spit for the first 24 hours. This will disturb the blood clot and prolong bleeding. It is better to swallow normally during this time.
- Do not use a straw for drinking for the first 3 days. Smoking is also very harmful to the blood clot and is not recommended during recovery.
- Some bleeding for the first day or two is normal. If bleeding persists, or is excessive, please notify us.
- For continued bleeding, a tea bag dipped in cold water may be very helpful in place of the gauze.

MEDICATIONS

- Have your prescriptions filled and take your medications as directed.
- Take the first dose of over the counter pain medication after you get home before the numbness wears off. Do not take the medication on an empty stomach. Take it with a large glass of liquid or light food (milkshake, soup, etc.).
- Remember that certain antibiotics may make birth control pills ineffective.
- Therefore, all women who are currently taking birth control pills should use another form of contraception, during the entire cycle, when antibiotics have been prescribed.

ICE

- Apply ice packs immediately to all areas of the face where surgery was performed.
- Place the ice packs on for 30 minutes and off for 30 minutes.
- Ice is helpful for the first 24 hours, and after that utilize moist heat.

PAIN

- Most discomfort should begin to subside 3 to 4 days after surgery. Some discomfort may last up to 7 days.
- If you continue to have pain after 3 or 4 days, call our office.

EARACHE/SORE THROAT

- It is normal to experience a slight earache or sore throat after surgery.
- You may also have a slight fever for 24 to 48 hours. If the fever continues after this period of time, notify us.

DIET

- Do not eat any foods that require chewing while you are numb. On the day of surgery, it is best to eat softer, cooler foods. Therefore, gradually return to your normal diet.
- Eating solid foods after the first couple of days of recovery will help to limber up the muscle stiffness in your jaws that normally accompanies surgery. Gentle exercise and chewing gum may also be helpful in relieving muscle tightness.

SWELLING AND/OR BRUISING

- Swelling after any surgical procedure is normal and typically occurs for 24 to 48 hours after surgery. This is especially true with a difficult tooth removed or removal of impacted teeth. The swelling and/or bruising may be minimal or extensive and may persist for several days.
- The use of ice and elevation of the head can be helpful to minimize swelling during the first couple days after surgery. (See “ICE” for more details.)

HYGIENE

- Cleanliness is a must for rapid and uncomplicated recovery.
- Brush your teeth gently.
- The day after surgery, brush as you normally would and begin rinsing with warm saltwater solution (1/2 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water) four to five times per day for one week. Do not use commercial mouthwashes because they contain alcohol that can irritate the wound.
- If you were given an irrigating syringe, use it gently flush out the extraction site(s) with warm salt water 3-4 times per day, starting three days after surgery.

NUMBNESS

- Some surgeries are performed very close to nerves, which can sometimes cause numbness or altered sensations, especially of the lower lip or tongue. These conditions are usually temporary and will likely disappear when the swelling goes down and the nerve heals.
- Should numbness persist beyond the first week, please call our office.