

Post-Operative Instructions for Care after Oral Surgery

At Commonwealth Oral and Facial Surgery, we realize that having any surgery can be stressful. Our desire is to have your post-operative course progress as smoothly as possible. These instructions provide some general guidelines regarding post-operative care; your doctor may give you additional instructions as well. Thank you for choosing Commonwealth Oral and Facial Surgery.

Bleeding

Do not disturb the surgical site or sites (no spitting or rinsing for 24 hours). Sutures may have been placed by your doctor that will dissolve within 7-14 days (but they might come out sooner) or non-dissolving sutures may have been placed which need to be removed at your post-operative appointment. **It is not unusual to continue having some bleeding well into the evening after surgery and some bleeding or redness in the saliva is normal for 24 hours.** Excessive bleeding can be controlled by placing a gauze pad on the surgical site and biting down firmly. Continue pressure for 30 minutes. If bleeding continues, place a moist tea bag over the surgical site for 30 minutes (the tannic acid in the tea helps to form a clot). If heavy bleeding continues, please call our office for further instructions.

Swelling

Swelling can be a normal occurrence after surgery. **In some instances, swelling can be worse or peak on the third to fourth day after surgery.** Should the swelling increase beyond this time period, or be accompanied by severe pain or an elevated temperature, please notify your doctor. To minimize swelling, apply an ice pack/bagged frozen peas or corn to the outside area of the surgery sites. **A good rule for proper circulation is to keep the ice pack in place for 20 minutes at a time then rest for 20 minutes. Please apply ice packs for 48 hours starting the day of surgery.** Another aid that can be used is frozen seedless grapes. Apply the grape between the surgical site and the cheek. This applies pressure and coolness. When laying down keep your head propped up on a couple of pillows, this will help reduce swelling.

Pain Medications (refer to pain management insert)

You may have been given **prescriptions** for one or more pain medications to help manage post-operative discomfort following your surgery. However, in most cases discomfort can be controlled with Tylenol or an anti-inflammatory medication (Advil/Motrin/Ibuprofen/Aleve). **(Please refer to the pain management insert)** Take these and all medications as prescribed and in the manner indicated by your doctor. It is a good idea to begin taking your pain medications while you are still numb.

While taking **narcotic pain medications**, do not drink alcoholic beverages, drive, or operate any machinery for 24 hours after the last dose of narcotic pain medicine. Some patients experience nausea and or vomiting as a result of narcotic pain medications. **Please be sure to eat at least 30 minutes before taking your pain medication because this could reduce your risk of nausea.** If you have a persistent problem with nausea or vomiting, please notify your doctor.

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Antibiotics

If you have been placed on antibiotics, take them as directed. If you have an unfavorable reaction such as a rash, please discontinue the medication and call the office for further instructions.

Oral Hygiene

Mouth cleanliness is essential to good healing. Start rinsing 24 hours after your surgery. Rinse with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon of salt to an 8 oz. cup of warm water) three to four times a day. Use the saltwater rinse in addition to any other rinses prescribed by your doctor. You may begin to brush your teeth 24 hours after surgery, and be gentle in the region(s) of the surgery.

If you had lower wisdom teeth extracted, you will find an irrigating (Monoject) syringe in your post op bag. **This syringe is to be started on the third day after your surgery.** You will fill up the syringe with the Chlorhexidine (Peridex) rinse (it's an antibacterial mouthwash) and flush out the lower extraction sites. This should be done several times a day until the extraction sites have closed. If you run out of the mouth rinse switch to warm saltwater.

Diet

Drink plenty of fluids; however, avoid hot/steamy foods and liquids. Cool soft food and liquids should be eaten on the day of surgery. You may return to a normal diet, as tolerated, beginning the day after surgery but avoid crunchy food (popcorn, pretzels, and potato chips) for a week after surgery, as these could become lodged and irritate the surgical area.

Activities

Risk of falling: If you have been given sedation and/or narcotic medication there is a chance you may become light headed/dizzy. Extra caution must be used to prevent falling.

Resume normal activities a day or so after surgery, or as directed by doctor. Please keep physical activities to a minimum immediately following surgery.

Avoid smoking for as long as possible following surgery. The use of tobacco products slows down the healing process and may lead to developing other complications. We strongly recommend avoiding tobacco products for one full week.

Other instructions specific to you: _____
