

## AFTER YOUR PERIODONTAL SURGERY

**BLEEDING:** *Light bleeding for the first 24 hours after surgery is quite common.* However, persistent or heavy bleeding is unusual. To control heavy bleeding, hold a damp teabag or piece of gauze in place for 20 minutes with gentle pressure, then repeat, if necessary, until bleeding is controlled. Do **NOT** rinse or forcibly spit. You may “drool” into a sink, if you feel the need. It’s important for the surgical site to clot - rinsing and spitting can dislodge the clot and delay healing. Even a small amount of blood may look like a lot. However, if excessive bleeding continues, please call our office.

**SWELLING:** *Swelling for the first few days is normal.* To minimize swelling and bleeding, begin using an external **ice pack** on your face on the part of your mouth closest to the surgical site *as soon as you return home* from our office. Fill a heavy duty baggie with crushed ice (*or use a bag of frozen peas*), wrap it in a light dish towel or handkerchief and apply for 15-20 minutes, then off for 15-20 minutes to reduce swelling, at least 4 times on the day of surgery and again on Day 2, if swelling persists.

**BRUISING:** *Expect minor bruising to the cheeks, lips, neck and face.* Do not obsess or worry about the appearance of the surgical site(s) for the first six (6) weeks. Tissues can appear white, gray, or discolored and still be responding well.

### **DIET:**

**Day of surgery through Day 3:** *Eat only cool, soft foods or smoothies* – avoid any chewing on the side of the mouth near the surgical site in order to minimize trauma and promote healing. Avoid any hot foods which could burn/cause injury while your lips, cheek & tongue are still numb. **High protein shakes** (*Ensure®*, *Boost®*) or **foods puréed in a blender** are the best choices for the first **3 days following surgery** (*ice cream, pudding, Jell-O®, cottage cheese, etc.*).

**Day 3 through Week 3:** *Continue a soft, high-protein diet for at least 3 weeks, unless your doctor advises you otherwise.* This is not the time to diet or restrict caloric intake. **Take a daily multi-vitamin.** Gradually add soft foods to your diet, such as *creamed soups & broth (less than 105°F), tuna salad, cream of wheat, mashed bananas, oatmeal, applesauce, rice, over-cooked pasta, omelets, mashed potatoes, mashed avocados, steamed vegetables, scrambled eggs, smoothies, fruit & vegetable juices, milk shakes, puddings, peanut butter, yogurt, ice cream/sherbets, nutritional drinks* (*Ensure®, Boost®, etc.*). **Avoid foods that are spicy** (*peppers, onions*), **acidic** (*tomatoes, oranges*), **highly seasoned, stringy** (*roast beef*) or **crunchy** (*popcorn, nuts, chips, croutons, raw carrots or apples, berries with seeds, hard-crust bread*) **for 3-4 weeks.**

**TOBACCO & ALCOHOL:** *Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours after surgery (48 hours if an IV anesthetic was used).* Since smoking of any kind/chewing tobacco reduces blood flow to the surgical site(s) and can interfere with healing, it should be avoided during the healing period (**7-14 days - purchase the patch if necessary**). If a bone graft was placed, it is recommended to quit for at least 6 weeks. Smoking decreases blood flow to the surgical sites and **will** decrease the success rate of surgery.

**MEDICATIONS:** *Never take medications on an empty stomach. Don’t take pain meds & antibiotics at same time.*

- **Over-the-counter pain medications:** Some discomfort should be expected from any oral surgical procedure. If your surgery involved multiple sites, incisions or sutures, expect a longer healing time & greater post-operative discomfort. Discomfort following surgery is usually well-controlled with over-the-counter pain medications such as ibuprofen (*Motrin®, Advil®*) & acetaminophen (*Tylenol®*) so long as you are able to take them. Research has shown that ibuprofen (*Motrin®, Advil®*), when alternated with acetaminophen (*Tylenol®*) can be as effective in controlling pain as prescription pain medications. Ibuprofen reduces inflammation, which contributes to pain & should be taken regularly over the 1<sup>st</sup> week.
- While you are still numb from surgery, take **600-800mg ibuprofen** (*Advil® or Motrin®*). **Four hours later, take two Extra Strength Tylenol® (500mg/tablet).** Continue repeating this regimen, alternating between the two medications for the first 48-72 hours, then take as needed to control pain. **Don’t take on an empty stomach.**

**Prescription pain medications:** When pain medications are prescribed, they should be reserved for *breakthrough pain*. Continue taking the ibuprofen as described above, but replace the Extra Strength Tylenol® dose with 1 tablet of the prescribed pain medication. **While taking prescription pain medications, avoid driving a car, drinking alcohol or operating any kind of heavy machinery.**

**Antibiotics.** *Always take antibiotics exactly as prescribed, until all are taken.* If you experience rashes or hives, **stop taking your antibiotic and contact our office immediately.** Don’t take pain medications & antibiotics at the same time (*can cause*

*severe stomach irritation and/or vomiting*). Please allow 1 hour between medications if possible. For women taking birth control pills - antibiotics may interfere with their effectiveness for a full cycle and precautions should be taken. After finishing the antibiotics, eat yogurt or drink buttermilk for 3-4 days to restore good intestinal bacteria.

**SINUS LIFT SURGERY:** If you had sinus surgery, please use a decongestant (Sudafed® or recommended alternative if you have uncontrolled hypertension) for 1<sup>st</sup> week. **If you must sneeze, keep your mouth open & do not try to stop the sneeze.**

**BLOOD THINNERS:** If you are prescribed blood thinners by your physician, do not discontinue taking these medications prior to periodontal surgery unless advised to do so by your physician following consultation with your dentist. If your doctor advised discontinuing blood thinners prior to periodontal surgery, confirm with your doctor when to resume taking them.

**ORAL HYGIENE:**

**RINSING.** If a chlorhexidine mouthwash such as *Peridex®* or *PerioGard®* was prescribed, **do not begin rinsing with it until the morning after the surgery.** Since toothpaste can reduce the rinse's effectiveness in removing plaque, rinse one hour *before or after* brushing your teeth. Rinse gently (*no chipmunk cheeks*) for 1 minute in the morning and again at bedtime as the last thing you do before going to bed. Let the prescription mouthwash drain from your mouth into the sink. This rinse may temporarily alter your taste perception but your sense of taste will return to normal after you stop using it. Surface stains caused by the mouthwash are temporary and will be polished off at your follow-up appointment.

You may also use warm salt-water (*1 teaspoon salt in 8 oz water*) 2-3 times each day starting the **day AFTER surgery.** **Do not use commercial mouthwashes, dental irrigator, water flosser or water-pick for 3 full weeks following surgery.** Avoid wearing a retainer or partial denture which rests on the surgical site until your doctor advises it.

**BRUSHING/FLOSSING.** Avoid brushing or flossing on the day of surgery. Beginning the **day after surgery,** brush and floss the biting surfaces of the **untreated areas** of your mouth as normal. For the **treated areas** of your mouth, use a soft manual toothbrush to clean the chewing surfaces of the teeth, but **do not brush the gums.** Do not use cotton swabs, cloth, your finger or any other soft or hard object to touch or clean the surgical area.

**SUTURES/PROTECTIVE DRESSING/PALATAL GUARD.** If stitches were placed, avoid "*feeling*" the surgical site with your tongue, which can cause the stitches to tear through the tissue. Sutures usually dissolve on their own in 7-10 days. Otherwise, they will be removed at your follow-up appointment. If a dressing has been applied to the surgical site, do not pick at it, but allow it to come off in its own time. If the roof of your mouth served as a graft donor site, you will be given a palatal guard which you should wear for the first 24 hours until you are comfortable without it. If bleeding occurs, the guard can be removed & rinsed, then reinserted after gentle pressure has been applied (damp gauze or tea bag) to control bleeding.

**ACTIVITY:**

**Day 1-2:** **Rest for the first 24 hours.** You may return to work or regular activities the following day, if you feel up to it. Keep your head elevated. If you had IV sedation, you must have someone over age 18 escort you from our office and observe you for the first 24 hours.

**Weeks 1-3:** **No vigorous or aerobic activities for the first 3 weeks. No weight liftines** or massaging the areas of the face near the surgical site for any reason. Avoid smoking. Do not pull on the lips or cheek. No playing wind instruments. No sucking on straws or blowing up balloons. No mints or chewing gum over the surgical site. No spitting. Expect cold sensitivity for first 6 weeks.

**Months 1-6:** No snorkeling for 6 months. **Indefinitely:** No clenching/grinding of teeth – wear prescribed bite appliance, if instructed.

**FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:** **It's important that you keep all scheduled appointments following periodontal surgery so that we can carefully monitor your healing and take care of any problems.**

**CALL OUR OFFICE IF: (719-654-0105)**

- 1. Bleeding is excessive and cannot be controlled.**
- 2. You notice sudden, increased pain or heat from the surgical site.**
- 3. Excessive nausea.**
- 4. Swelling is excessive, spreading or continuing to enlarge after 60 hours.**
- 5. Allergic reactions to medications occur, which are causing a generalized rash or itching.**