

Post-Operative Instructions Following Periodontal Surgery

The most important factor affecting healing is stabilization of the surgical site following the procedure. Do all that you can to avoid disturbing the surgical site. Do not pull your lips or cheeks or open wide to look at the surgical site. This will destabilize the site and will lead to less than optimal results and possibly failure of the procedure.

- 1) Take all normal prescription medications and medications associated with the procedure as prescribed.
- 2) Begin your Peridex rinse the night after surgery. **Gently** swish for at least 60 seconds. Do not rinse after spitting out the mouthwash as this will remove the active mouthwash from the surgical site and decrease its antimicrobial activity. **DO NOT BRUSH YOUR TEETH WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF USING MOUTHWASH AS IT WILL INACTIVATE THE ANTIMICROBIAL PROPERTIES OF THE RINSE.**
- 3) **Pain Control** - The best way to control pain is to take 600 mg of Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) every 6 hours. That is three 200 mg tablets at once every 6 hours. If that is not enough to control the discomfort adequately, you can alternate 2 extra strength Tylenol (500 mg each tablet for a total of 1000 mg) with the Ibuprofen regimen at 3 hour intervals. Thus, you would take 600 mg of Ibuprofen, 3 hours later you would take 2 extra strength Tylenol, 3 hours later take 600 mg Ibuprofen and keep alternating until the discomfort is adequately controlled. If you are prescribed a stronger pain medication such as Vicoden (Lortab), you should not take the Tylenol because the prescribed pain medication already has Tylenol in it. **YOU SHOULD SUBSTITUTE THE PRESCRIBED PAIN MEDICATION FOR TYLENOL AND USE THE ALTERNATING REGIMEN DESCRIBED ABOVE.** Thus, you would take 600 mg of Ibuprofen, 3 hours later you would take the prescribed pain medication, 3 hours later take 600 mg Ibuprofen and keep alternating until the discomfort is adequately controlled. If too much Tylenol is ingested at one time, severe liver damage can result.
- 4) Do **not** take **aspirin** products for pain control unless you are instructed to do so by your physician. If taking aspirin as part of a daily regimen, you may continue to do so on the day of surgery and during healing unless specifically instructed not to do so.
- 5) Do **not smoke** within a minimum of 1 week from the time of surgery as it can dramatically adversely affect the results of treatment and is the number one controllable reason for surgical failure and extreme post-operative pain.
- 6) Apply ice packs to surgical site frequently (20 minutes on, 20 minutes off) to minimize swelling during the first 24 hours. After 24 hours, a warm compress can be applied to the area to increase blood circulation and promote healing.
- 7) Eat soft foods and avoid chewing on surgical site.

- 8) No sucking from a straw or spitting for 1 week following surgery. This includes anything that will cause your lips to be pursed and creates suction such as drinking directly from a water bottle, sucking on a popsicle, etc. If blood is gathering in your mouth do not spit it out as this will make the bleeding worse by dislodging the blood clot which acts to stop bleeding. Try to wipe the blood from your mouth with a paper towel rather than spit it out.
- 9) Do not disturb the surgical site by touching, brushing, or flossing the surgical area.
- **Do not remove any sutures under any circumstances.** Some sutures may fall out on their own and some may need to be removed at a 1, 2, or 3 week follow-up visit. If a suture is dangling or is loose, do not cut it. Often, a single or several very long sutures are used to close a surgical site and one part of that can become loose. This is ok because the rest of the long suture is still doing its job. If that small loose area is cut, the entire suture will come out and surgical failure often results. If your sutures become loose and are bothering you, you can call the office and we can fix the problem.
 - Do not brush the surgical site after surgery until you are specifically instructed to. Yes, I am a dentist and am instructing you not to brush your teeth! You will want to brush the area because it often builds up lots of deposits such as food and plaque, especially when sutures are present, but you must avoid this urge. The Peridex rinse is killing the bacteria in the area and the surgical site must remain stable during healing.
 - If a dressing is placed, do not remove any portion of it. It may or may not fall off before you return for your follow-up visit.
- 10) No heavy activity/exercise for 48 hours. Keep blood pressure down! If your blood pressure is elevated during exercise, it can cause excess swelling, bleeding, and bruising.
- 11) **IF BLEEDING WILL NOT STOP:** Some bleeding and oozing from the surgical site will occur and is completely normal. You may wake up for a few days following surgery with a crust of blood on your lips or some blood on your pillow. That is normal. If bleeding is actively coming from the surgical site, apply direct pressure to surgical site with gauze for 15 minutes continuously. **DO NOT REMOVE THE PRESSURE WITH GAUZE EVEN ONCE DURING THIS 15 MINUTE PERIOD.** 15 minutes of constant pressure will stop 99.9% of bleeds. If you do not have gauze at home, a tea bag works very well. If bleeding does not stop, call Dr. Cook immediately, [817-914-1491](tel:817-914-1491) no matter the time of day. Put a towel on your pillowcase in the evening to avoid staining linens.
- 12) Tooth sensitivity, especially to cold, is a common side effect of surgery and can last several weeks. To decrease sensitivity, you can brush with an anti-sensitivity toothpaste such as Sensodyne or rinse with a Fluoride mouthwash such as ACT.
- 13) If you are prescribed an antibiotic, the antibiotic works by suppressing bacteria that cause infections at the surgical site. The antibiotic can sometimes suppress the “good” bacteria in your gut and can cause discomfort and diarrhea. To avoid this or minimize this, you can eat or drink something with “active or live” bacterial cultures in it such as a probiotic or Activia yogurt. Take this every day as long as you are on the antibiotic and your life will be much better!