

Richard M. Wagner, DDS
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
1925 South Green Bay Road
Racine, WI 53406
(262)-634-4646 (262)-654-4222
www.jaw-doc.com

CARE OF THE MOUTH FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY AND ANESTHESIA

We expect that you should do well after your surgical care. Most people do very well and have little or no problems. On this sheet we have tried to address the most common concerns brought to our attention. If you do have any questions for us, we are here for you. Please don't hesitate to call.

GAUZE: Folded gauze square is commonly placed over the surgical site and should be held firmly over the site with biting pressure or your finger. This can be changed every 20 to 30 minutes. This should be discontinued after about an hour. It can be repeated if needed, but should not be left in for an extended period of time. Remember that a small amount of bleeding is to be expected and normal. A small amount of blood in the saliva is normal and may be visible for 1 to 2 days after surgery. Call our office if unusual bleeding persists.

THE HEALING CLOT: During the first few minutes after surgery, a clot forms at the surgical site. The clot is living tissue that depends on the surrounding tissue and bone for its blood supply. During the first 24 hours, the clot undergoes a change where it becomes fixed in place and provides the framework for proper healing. Avoid activities that would dislodge the clot from the sites. Small sharp bone fragments may work through the gums during the healing process. These are not roots. If they cause any problems, return to our office for simple removal.

DO NOT RINSE YOUR MOUTH OUT TODAY: Spitting and rinsing causes increased bleeding. Do not spit; this could dislodge the healing clot. Do not touch the surgical site with fingers, toothpick, or tongue. Irritation, bleeding, or infection can result. Gentle rinsing at the surgical sites can be done starting the day after surgery. Use ¼ teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water for this rinsing. After 1 week you can begin progressing back to your regular oral hygiene at the surgical sites.

NO SMOKING AFTER SURGERY: Cigarette smoke contains carbon monoxide and nicotine which are both toxic to the healing tissues. Smoking even one cigarette can harm the healing process and lead to healing complications. Give yourself this week off from smoking to allow for healing, you may find it will be a first step in kicking the habit.

DISCOMFORT: A medication for discomfort is usually prescribed. Use it as directed. Alcoholic beverages should not be used while taking narcotic pain medications. Also, appropriate caution should be taken to avoid activities that require alertness while on pain medications. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Aleve or Ibuprofen work at the surgical sites to decrease swelling and inflammation and reduce discomfort. These can be used along with the pain medication. Watch for stomach upset with these

medications. You should not use these drugs if you are on medications to thin your blood. If after 3 to 4 days slow improvement does not occur or if pain increases, this can be a sign of complications; and our office should be notified.

SWELLING: Swelling is a common reaction to surgery. Taking Aleve or Ibuprofen will do the most to decrease swelling and inflammation at the sites. Many people like to use an ice bag or ice wrapped in a towel to apply to the face on the side of the extraction. If this method is used apply the cold pack for 20 minutes of each hour during the first 24 hours.

DIET: Proper dietary intake is important for good healing. You can progress to a normal diet as tolerated. Adequate fluid intake is very important. Diet supplements (Carnation Instant Breakfast, Boost, Ensure etc.) are available through your pharmacy or grocery stores and may be helpful if solid foods are not tolerated. Resume a normal diet as soon as possible. Hard foods or foods with husks such as nuts and popcorn should be avoided as they can become stuck in the surgical site. Do not use a straw as this creates negative pressure in the mouth and can affect healing.

NAUSEA: It is important to take in some nourishment after anesthesia, as this will help to settle an upset stomach. If you have nausea, start with some liquid such as 7-Up or Gatorade. As soon as you can tolerate it, try to progress onto solids. First try something bland like saltine crackers. Be careful with solids if you are numb from the local anesthetic, as you could bite the lip, tongue, or cheek and not feel it. If nausea continues, an over-the-counter medication such as Emetrol or Bonine can be tried. If nausea continues, please call; and prescription medications can be considered.

Our practice philosophy is one of high quality comprehensive care with special attention to your comfort. We are happy to serve you!