



## Easy Post- Operative Care

**Following surgery** the last thing you want to worry about is a complication due to poor post-operative care. We find that post-operative plans work best when they are conveniently woven into a patient's life in a way that helps you concentrate on healing. This simple to navigate package of information gives you top advice, treatments, and habits that will expedite you're healing!

### **Bleeding, Swelling, and Pain immediately after surgery...**

First and foremost, after placement of dental implants, do not disturb the wound. That means avoid *rinsing*, *spitting*, or *touching* of the wound on the day of the surgery. Dr. McCracken may even advise you to avoid blowing your nose in some cases. A small amount of bleeding, pain, and swelling is perfectly normal. But, there are certain tricks to keep these post-op nuances to a minimum.

**Bleeding:** Keep *steady pressure* over the surgical site following the procedure. Pressure helps reduce bleeding and permits the formation of a clot. Gently remove the compress after *one hour*. If bleeding persists, place another compress and again keep steady pressure on the area for one hour. A moistened tea bag applied to the site for thirty minutes may also help to stop bleeding. Blood or redness in the saliva is normal. If bleeding continues, we recommend calling the office for further instructions. It's a good idea to limit or reduce your oral activity as much as possible for several hours after surgery. Avoid any unnecessary eating, drinking and talking. These oral activities may hinder proper healing, especially in the first few hours.

**Swelling:** Any swelling can be minimized by applying an ice pack, on the cheek or on the jaw directly, in the area of surgery. If an ice pack is unavailable, simply fill a heavy plastic bag with crushed ice. Secure the end, and cover with a soft cloth to avoid skin irritation. Frozen bags of peas make wonderful ice packs and can be re-frozen and used repeatedly. Immediately following the procedure, it is advisable to apply the ice pack over the affected area- 20 minutes on, and 20 minutes off- for 2-4 hours, to prevent the development of excessive swelling and discomfort. Apply the ice as often as necessary, for the first 24 hours ONLY. You may expect swelling for up to 10 days and possibly a fever of 99 degrees to 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Pain:** To minimize any discomfort from the pain, before the anesthesia wears off and feeling has returned to normal, begin taking medication as directed by Dr. McCracken. For *moderate pain*, over-the- counter Tylenol or Ibuprofen comes in 200mg tablets. Two to three tablets may be taken every three to four hours as needed to relieve the ache. For *severe pain*, the prescribed medication should be taken as directed. Take the prescribed narcotic medication if you experience significant pain. If anti-inflammatory medication was prescribed, begin taking the medication with food immediately after the procedure and continue as directed. If you were not prescribed any anti-inflammatory medication and you don't have a known allergy to aspirin or ibuprofen (Motrin), you can take 600mg of ibuprofen (Motrin) every six hours to control mild to moderate pain.

**\*\*Note: Do not take any of the above medications if you are allergic, or have been instructed by your doctor not to take it.\*\*** Prescribed antibiotics to help prevent infection are usually started an hour or two prior to implant surgery, and continued for about one week afterward. *Cold, then warm:* remember, in terms of compresses and foods, administer cold items for the first 24 hours and then warm afterward.



### **Ongoing Oral Hygiene...**

Good oral hygiene is essential to good healing. This includes warm salt water rinses (a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water) at least four to five times a day. *\*\*Wait until 24 hour after the surgery to start the rinses to minimize the chance of disturbing the blood clot.\*\** Repeat after every meal or snack for seven days. Rinsing is important because it removes food particles and debris and thus helps promote healing. You can also brush your tongue with a dry toothbrush to keep bacteria growth down but be careful not to touch the surgical site. Resume your regular tooth brushing after two days but still avoid disturbing the surgical area.

### **Diet...**

Eating might seem like the last thing on your mind after dental surgery, but it is still important to nourish your body. Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid hot liquids or food. Soft, cool food and liquids should be consumed on the day of surgery and then steadily returning to a normal diet over the course of two weeks.

- **Maintain proper diet:** Have your meals at the usual time. Eat soft, nutritious foods, and hydrate your mouth regularly with liquids during meals and in between. However, always be careful not to disturb the blood clot.
- **Warning:** For two weeks after surgery do not eat or drink: spicy foods, acidic juices (orange, grapefruit, etc.) chips, popcorn or carbonated drinks.

### **Wearing Your Removable Prosthesis...**

Partial or full dentures should not be used immediately after surgery and for at least 10 days thereafter unless the doctor advises you to.

### **Activity...**

It is wise to keep physical activities to a minimum immediately following surgery.

- **Rest up and heal:** Otherwise you could be setting your recovery back by a few days. If you engage in vigorous exercise throbbing or bleeding at the surgical site may occur. If this happens you should discontinue exercising. Also keep in mind that you are probably not taking in the normal amount of calories for the normal exercise. This may weaken you and further limit your ability. If you should have any problems such as excessive bleeding, pain, or difficulty in opening your mouth, call the office immediately for further instructions, assistance, or additional treatment.
- **Remember your follow up visit:** You will be scheduled to return for a *post-operative visit* to make certain healing is progressing satisfactorily. While you wait for that appointment maintain a healthful diet, observe the basic rules for proper oral hygiene, and call the office if you have any questions or concerns.



## Post-Op Care Recap

### Here are the top ten tips for care after surgery:

1. **Don't touch!** Keep fingers and tongue away from surgical area.
2. **Cool it!** Use ice packs on surgical area (side of face) for the first 12 hours; apply ice 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off. Bags of frozen peas work quite well for this.
3. **Still hurts?** For mild discomfort take Tylenol or Ibuprofen every three to four hours.
4. **In pain?** For severe pain please use the prescription medication for pain given to you.
5. **Hydrate yourself.** Drink plenty of fluids. *Do not use a straw.*
6. **Chew gum.** If the muscles of the jaw become stiff, chewing gum at intervals will help relax the muscles. The use of warm, moist heat on the outside of your face *beginning on the second day* after surgery will further help with relaxation of the muscle.
7. **Eat soft foods.** Diet may consist of soft foods, which can be easily chewed and swallowed. No seeds, nuts, rice, or popcorn!
8. **Blood?** A certain amount of bleeding can be expected following surgery. Bleeding is controlled by applying pressure to the surgical area for 90 minutes. Then you may eat or drink. If bleeding persists, a moist tea bag should be held firmly on the area of bleeding for one straight hour.
9. **No smoking, please!** Do not smoke for at least 5 days after surgery.
10. **Drugs?** If you are on other medications, be sure to discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist to minimize adverse drug interactions. You should start taking a multivitamin daily if you are not already doing so.

## The First 24 Hours

After surgery, some people find it difficult to eat or enjoy their food. This reluctance to sit down at mealtimes, plus an inability to consume normal, solid food, is especially true after dental surgery. And it's not difficult to see why! Too much chewing, slurping, or sucking can aggravate the treated area, which therefore can result in discomfort and even pain. It also can potentially re-open the area, causing bleeding or infection that will delay healing or cause problems with the surgery if the area is disturbed too much. However, despite any fears or lack of appetite, it's vital that you continue to eat, as nutrients provide energy and facilitate your healing process on the road to recovery.

Many patients ask, "What types of foods are the best?" "What sort of meals should be avoided?" In general, the rule of thumb is: **No spicy foods, chips, popcorn, acidic juices, or carbonated drinks.**

Please call our office with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your dental treatment. If there are any questions regarding your medications or any reaction to them, other than as described by the doctor, please contact the office immediately! We are here to help!

**\*\*\*SEDATED PATIENTS CAN NOT TAKE ANY PAIN MEDICINE UNTIL NEXT DAY\*\*\***

**\*\*If you experience any significant variation in the expected post-operative course please contact Dr. McCracken at (903)319-6971.**