

## Post Operative Instructions After Periodontal Surgery

**Antibiotic:** If an antibiotic has been prescribed, start taking it the day of the surgery. It is very important that you finish all of the pills, as prescribed, because they will give you the best chance to prevent infection. You can reduce stomach upset by taking them with food and plenty of liquid.

**Ibuprofen (such as Advil, Motrin, or Generic Brand):** Unless you have a reason that you cannot take ibuprofen (such as an allergy to ibuprofen or aspirin or a stomach ulcer), take 600 mg of ibuprofen (3 pills) at a time, every 6 hours. Start taking this dose the day of the surgery, and take it for the next 2 days, whether you have pain or not. Ibuprofen is a very good anti-inflammatory medication that will help decrease swelling, which will help reduce pain and discomfort. After 2 days, you can still take ibuprofen, as needed, for pain. Tylenol is not effective against swelling but you can take 1 tablet every 6 hours if you cannot take Ibuprofen or Aspirin.

**Prescribed Narcotic Pain Pills (Percocet, Vicodin, Tylenol #3, etc):** Take one of these pain pills along with your Ibuprofen dose as soon as you can after surgery because it usually works better if it is taken before the numbness wears off. After that, take these pain pills only as needed for pain. Do not take more than 1 of these pain pills every 6 hours. Take these pain pills with food and plenty of water to prevent stomach upset. Do not drive a motor vehicle, drink alcohol, or use additional sleeping pills while taking these medications.

If any, the worst pain or discomfort after periodontal surgery is usually around 48-72 hours after surgery. Please do not be alarmed if pain and/or swelling increases up to 48-72 hours after surgery. After this time, your discomfort should gradually decline daily.

**Swelling:** Most people will get some swelling and, and if they do, it usually happens about 24-48 hours after surgery. Slight discoloration (black and blue) of the face is also normal during this time. Using the ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Generic Ibuprofen), ice bag, and sleeping in an inclined position, as directed above, will help a great deal with keeping swelling to a minimum.

**Ice bag:** To keep swelling to a minimum, use a cold pack (wrapped in a soft cloth) to the skin on the face over the area where the procedure was performed for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off. Do this for the first 24 hours after your surgery. Doing this may allow you to have less swelling and therefore much less pain. Remember, Less Swelling = Less Pain. If swelling continues after the first 24 hour period, switch to a warm heating pad every 20 minutes for another day.

**Sleep:** For the first 2 nights after the procedure, try to sleep in a somewhat inclined position, with your head propped up with some pillows. By keeping your head above your heart level, you may significantly cut down on post-operative swelling. Remember, Less Swelling = Less Pain.

**Prescription Antibacterial Mouth Rinse (Periogard or Peridex):** You may be asked to use a special prescription antibacterial mouth rinse which you will need to pick up from the pharmacy. Please gently rinse with this mouth rinse about ½ hour after brushing your teeth. The lingering effects of the fluoride in toothpaste may deactivate the good effects of the mouthwash

if you rinse with it any earlier than that. Rinse with this mouthwash for **1 minute**, in the **morning and at night**, taking care not to spit out the mouthwash forcefully. Also, soak a Q-tip in a cup of the mouthwash and apply this Q-tip gently to the gums and teeth of the surgical area 3 times/day for 2 weeks. Do not scrub it in.

**Salt-water rinses:** Starting the day of surgery, rinse your mouth (don't swish) with warm salt water (1/2-teaspoon of salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water). Hold this in your mouth for 30 seconds and then spit out very gently. Repeat. Do this 3-4 times per day for 7 days.

**Oral hygiene:** Make sure that you properly brush and floss all the teeth in your mouth because this greatly helps healing. Every night, use a Q-tip soaked in mouthwash to gently cleanse the area of plaque and debris. As soon as you can tolerate it, you may resume your normal oral hygiene procedures (brushing twice a day and flossing once a day) in the surgical area. To minimize traumatizing the surgical area, always use an extra-soft bristled toothbrush and be very gentle when flossing.

**Exercise:** Avoid strenuous exercise for the first 7 days after surgery. Strenuous physical activity may increase post-operative pain or cause post-operative bleeding and swelling.

**Touching the surgical site:** Do not touch the surgical area during the first 2 weeks, in order to prevent contamination. Avoid stretching your mouth to look at the site or to show it to friends or family. Use caution when washing your face, and avoid playing with your tongue on the surgical sites.

**Stitches:** If the stitches are dissolvable, they should fall out between 7 to 10 days. If the stitches are not dissolvable, they will be removed by me in about 2 weeks.

**Bleeding:** "Pink" saliva is normal for a few days. If bleeding is excessive, apply gentle pressure to the cheek and tongue side of the surgical area for 10 minutes with a soaking wet soaking wet gauze pad. Making sure the gauze is wet prevents the gums from being traumatized and from bleeding more. If this doesn't stop the bleeding, apply pressure with a wet black tea bag for 30 min. If the bleeding just won't stop, contact the office.

**Food:** For the first 2 weeks after surgery:

- Stay on a soft diet until pain subsides (pudding, milkshakes, scrambled eggs, pasta, mashed potatoes, luke-warm soup, oatmeal, jell-o, etc.).
- Chew away from the surgical area (on the other side of your mouth).
- Avoid foods that are likely to get stuck in the surgical area (popcorn, nuts, seeds, etc).
- Avoid acidic foods, like tomatoes, and hot or spicy foods because these may cause pain. For the same reason, avoid citric, hot, or acidic beverages.
- It is helpful to drink a few servings of a nutritional food supplement (Carnation Instant Breakfast drink, Ensure shake, Slim-Fast shake, etc.) to make sure you are getting enough nutrients and protein to promote good healing.
- Drink at least eight 10-ounce glasses of water per day.

**Smoking:** Do not smoke because it will result in more pain and slower healing. Pipes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco should also be avoided.