

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS **FOR PERIODONTAL SURGERY**

Another phase of your periodontal therapy has been partially or totally completed. The surgical procedure that was performed was designed to eliminate periodontal disease and to repair any defects that the disease caused in the supporting structures around your teeth. Quiet rest these next several hours will insure early, comfortable and complete healing. This is the time to be good to yourself and to be pampered. You deserve it!

COMFORT

You may expect to have discomfort when the anesthetic wears off. We suggest that you take a pain pill before the numbness begins to wear off so that the transition will be smooth. When you begin to feel the first signs of pain, take another pain pill as long as you are within the guidelines printed on the bottle or that we discussed. If your pain medication contains codeine, wash it down with a dairy product to soothe your stomach. For minor discomfort, take an aspirin substitute such as Tylenol (acetaminophen). Aspirin and Advil tend to encourage bleeding early after surgery. It is normal to experience a slight feeling of weakness or chills during the first day or two after surgery. This is part of the body's defense mechanism and is not cause for alarm.

DRESSING (Bandage)

Sometimes a surgical dressing is placed around the teeth in the surgical site. It can serve to protect the area from irritants like coarse or spicy foods. Do not eat or drink hot things for the first couple days so that the dressing can harden. If small pieces of the dressing are lost or even if the whole thing is dislodged, don't worry. The dressing really doesn't affect healing one way or the other so if you are comfortable there is no reason to replace it.

SWELLING

You may experience some swelling of the face or jaw around the surgical area. It may start during the first twenty-four hours, last a few days then begin to subside. This is a normal defense mechanism and is no cause for alarm. To help prevent swelling, place an ice bag on your face outside the surgical area during the first twenty-four hours after the procedure. Leave it on fifteen minutes, off fifteen minutes then back on, etc. After the swelling has reached its peak in two or three days, warm compresses can be applied to speed recovery.

Some patients tend to bruise on the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This is normal and should not alarm you. If swelling or bruising persist and concern you, do not hesitate to give us a call.

BLEEDING

Some oozing of blood from the surgical site is normal during the first twenty-four hours so do not be alarmed if you notice pink streaks in your saliva. If it persists and your mouth is filling with red blood, try to locate the area that it is coming from. Sit quietly, fold a cold washcloth or a tea bag into a “U” and with the thumb and index finger, and apply firm pressure to both sides of the dressing for twenty minutes.

If you are unable to control the bleeding in this manner, give us a call right away. It is also helpful to sleep with your head elevated by a couple pillows the first night after surgery.

ANTIBIOTICS

If you were prescribed an antibiotic, take it conscientiously as directed until all are gone. By stopping in the middle, you can actually do more harm than good.

ORAL HYGIENE

You will not be able to brush or floss the area covered by the dressing but you should continue normal procedures in the rest of your mouth.

After twenty-four hours, gently swish a mouthwash such as diluted Listerine or Amosan three or four times a day. Warm salt-water rinses made with 1/2 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water are also encouraged after twenty-four hours to aid healing.

DIET

The importance of a nutritious diet cannot be overemphasized, especially during this healing period when your body is stressed. If you will eat good soft foods, you will feel better, remain more comfortable and heal faster.

Avoid eating on the treated side, if possible. A liquid diet is best for the first one or two meals, such as: milkshakes, smoothies, ensure, boost, Instant Breakfast, fruit juices and lukewarm soup. Avoid hot liquids the first several hours but cold liquids are encouraged. Soft foods should be eaten during the first five to seven days because they require so little pressure to chew. Here are some suggestions: eggs (omelets, quiche, custard, etc.), cooked cereal, pancakes, pasta, noodle casseroles, meat loaf, baked fish, chicken and dumplings, soft breads and ice cream. Vitamin C aids healing so orange juice and tomato juice are excellent. You should also continue with your normal vitamin supplements.

POST-OPERATIVE VISITS

At the first post-operative visit, we will remove the dressing and any sutures that were placed. The teeth in the surgical site will be polished to remove plaque so that a clean environment can be established that is conducive to healing. Although the gums will be pretty much healed at this time, important healing will continue under the gum line for several months.

At the second post-operative visit, we will again polish the teeth and treat any sensitivity to cold or hot that has resulted from surgery. Both of these visits are short and you should expect little if any discomfort.

TOOTH SENSITIVITY

Removing the long-standing bacterial accumulations from your teeth can result in some sensitivity to cold, hot or sweets. This sensitivity can last anywhere from a couple weeks to a couple months depending on the amount and duration of your bacterial accumulations.

You can help end root sensitivity by exercising good plaque removal since the bacterial acids are a major cause. We can also prescribe a fluoride paste for you to brush on daily that will speed your recovery. Gel and tartar control formula toothpastes tend to make the sensitivity worse so avoid them.

MAINTENANCE PHASE

You were taught how to maintain a plaque-free mouth prior to the surgical phase and you are aware of the importance of personal oral hygiene in successful periodontal therapy. In surgically eliminating the pockets or “hiding areas” that you were previously unable to cleanse, the contour and shape of the tissues around the teeth have been changed. For this reason, we may have to alter your techniques slightly or provide you with other aids to more effectively “deplaque.” This will be done at your periodic Maintenance Therapy visits along with scaling and root planning to prevent the recurrence of periodontal disease.

Dr. Schaberg’s Mobile- 314-605-6907

Office Phone: (314) 434-4676