

## Care After Dental Surgery

Dental surgery areas usually heal quickly and without complications if simple common sense precautions are taken. However, these areas should not be neglected and you have some added responsibilities to make sure that this area heals properly.

PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW CAREFULLY:

1) PAIN - The mouth is a highly sensitive area. The surgical area will be sore for a few days, but after about 3 days the pain should start to decrease. Remember to take your prescribed medications as directed.

2) BLEEDING - You can expect this area to bleed. You are to bite firmly on the gauze that has been provided for about 30 minutes. After this, carefully remove the gauze and check if the bleeding has stopped. If not, take another piece of gauze, fold it up, and bite firmly for another 30 minutes. Continue this routine until the bleeding stops (which can take anywhere from 30 minutes - 3 or 4 hours). Try to sit upright and do not do anything that is too strenuous. Over the next couple of days you may notice that this area is oozing - which means that you may taste some blood in your mouth or you may see some blood in your saliva or toothpaste - this is normal and is not anything to be concerned about. Another way to control the bleeding is to bite on a tea bag for 30 minutes. If the bleeding does not stop after a few hours, please contact the dentist.

### 3) PROTECTING THE SURGICAL AREA

a) If you smoke, you MUST AVOID SMOKING FOR AT LEAST 7 DAYS. If you do not, you are putting yourself at high risk for infection and delayed healing.

b) You must avoid rinsing with mouthwash and you can not drink alcoholic beverages for at least 1 week after surgery. The alcohol (which is found in some mouthwashes) will dissolve the blood clot, thus affecting the healing area.

You are allowed to rinse with warm salt water.

c) You can not drink anything through a straw for at least one week after surgery. The sucking action will dislodge the blood clot. Sucking candies must also be avoided. Also, extremely hot or cold liquids (including soda pop) should be avoided for the first 24hrs after surgery.

d) Try to keep your tongue, toothbrush, and fingers away from the surgical area. Also, avoid eating on this side (if possible).

4) SWELLING - Swelling and stiffness are common after surgery and should not be cause for concern. An ice pack can be used on the effected area. Place the ice pack on your face for 10 minute intervals, resting for 10 minutes between applications (10 minutes on, 10 minutes off). Continue this routine as often as possible. It is best to use the icepacks as soon as possible after surgery. The swelling should peak by the 3rd day after surgery, and then it should start to decrease. If this does not happen, or if the swelling continues to worsen after the 4th day, be sure to contact the dentist.

5) BRUISING - Bruising is caused by bleeding into the tissues and can be a normal post-operative event. Application of hot wet towels will speed its disappearance.

6) HOMECARE - CLEANLINESS OF THE MOUTH AND TEETH ARE ESSENTIAL. A lukewarm salt-water rinse (1/2 teaspoon of salt in a tall glass of water) should be used 4 times a day starting the day after surgery. Also, rinse with the Oro-X antibacterial mouthrinse 2 times daily. This will promote healing and helps destroy objectionable odors and tastes. When you spit out the saltwater, do not spit very hard. You do not want to spit out the blood clot. The same advice should be followed when spitting out toothpaste. Brush as usual but avoid the healing surgical site. Proper oral hygiene is important to prevent infection of the site. It is also important that you maintain a balanced high protein diet for healing to occur - but all foods should be soft. An abundance of cool fluids and a multi-vitamin or meal replacement shakes are encouraged. Warm soups and broths are suggested 24hrs after surgery.

7) CHILDREN - Due to the local anesthetic (freezing), a young child may bite his cheek, lip, or tongue. This may cause a laceration and/or swelling. Carefully watch your child to prevent this because once the local anesthetic wears off, the area can be very painful.

8) COMPLICATIONS - If at any time you have abnormal pain, bleeding, swelling, if the sutured area opens, or if the area starts to feel worse after 3-4 days have passed, please contact Dr. Len at the following numbers:

During Office Hours: 604-535-8847 After Office Hours: 604-720-7528