

### **Surgical Post Operative Instructions:**

- 1) Post operative care is your responsibility though we are here ready to help
- 2) If you are sedated it is the escort's responsibility to ensure you follow the instructions carefully.
- 3) On the first day the goal is to control the bleeding and minimize pain
  - a. Bite on gauze firmly for one hour. This allows formation of a blood clot in the socket. (talk without moving your teeth)
  - b. If bleeding persists, fold gauze into a firm wad and place it directly on the bleeding area. Maintain firm pressure by biting for another hour. The gauze may be substituted by a 'black tea' bag as the tannic acid has a clotting effect. (placing tea bags in the freezer before biting on them can also provide a soothing effect).
  - c. Do not suck on the operating area or drink through a straw.
  - d. Smoking and alcohol should be avoided for 48 hours.
- 4) Starting on the next day, the goal is to prevent infection
  - a. Rinse your mouth after every meal to keep socket clean. Salt water is preferred but plain will suffice.
  - b. Heat packs can be applied to the swollen areas 36 hours later.
  - c. Resume your retainers or splints soon after the bleeding has stopped.

### **Diet**

Have only fluids and very soft foods during the first 48 hours after surgery (soup, cottage cheese, milk, milk shakes, yogurt are suitable). Acid drinks might upset your stomach. It will be uncomfortable to eat firm foods for up to a week. Use a blender to prepare soups, purée and other foods in advance for the postoperative period. Buy some calorific or protein enhanced "build-up" drinks from a pharmacy (Boost or Ensure). Multivitamins (if possible, in a liquid form) are also worth taking, in conjunction with calcium supplements to aid bone healing. Try to minimize sugar as sugar induces inflammation. Drink at least 3 litres of water each day.

### **Oral hygiene**

Good oral hygiene is important to aid healing. Use a soft toothbrush to clean the teeth. It may be uncomfortable to brush the inside of the teeth for a few days. Do not worry; no lasting harm will result; if necessary, a professional cleaning may be arranged by your dentist. Over-the-counter antiseptic mouth rinses are relatively expensive and do little to aid oral hygiene. A salt-water rinse is as effective as the mouthwash. Peridex (chlorhexidine) mouth rinse is very effective; you should use this routinely (it is available on prescription) after surgery.

### **Lifestyle**

It is expected that you will be tender and sore for a couple of days after surgery. If possible, limit social engagements, fitness classes, participation in sports, and concentrate on your recuperation.

### **Complications**

The surgery, as with all procedures, has complications that you may, or may not, experience. These are listed below:

#### *Pain*

Take the painkillers as prescribed to manage the discomfort of the surgery postoperatively. Pain is at its worst in the first 24 hours. The pain gradually settles, but anti-inflammatories (ibuprofen/Advil) taken at maximum recommended doses are usually sufficient. Should the ibuprofen fail to take away all the pain, consider taking Tylenol #3 as well (check the prescribing information first). Alternating the ibuprofen and Tylenol #3 so that you are taking one dose of ibuprofen and then the Tylenol half way between your next ibuprofen dose tends to help maintain consistent pain management and prevent

peaks and valleys of pain control. Tylenol can substitute for ibuprofen if still in pain, do not hesitate to call our office or my personal cell.

### *Bleeding*

Bleeding after surgery occasionally happens, and is usually not troublesome. Some occasional oozing from the site for the next 48 hours can be normal, and when mixed with saliva, can appear to be far worse than it actually is. But if you have constant ooze of blood from the wounds during the first 24 hours, this may indicate a bleeding disorder or fractured blood vessel, call me, and the bleeding can be dealt with.

### *Bruising*

Bruising typically affects the cheeks. It may take 14 days or longer until the bruises start to fade. Cosmetic face cream or powder will mask the bruising. Rarely there might be a bruise on your arm at the site of the IV. This will also take a while to fade.

### *Jaw stiffness*

The jaw sometimes stiffens after surgery, so you may feel that it is not possible to open as widely as before surgery. The mouth opening will return to normal after a while, but may take several weeks until it feels right again.

### *Altered sensation in the lower lip*

If relevant to your circumstances, this will have been discussed in detail before the surgery. The nerve supplying sensation to the lower lip passes through the jaw beneath the roots of the lower teeth, and it may be bruised as a tooth is removed. The nerve may not function normally for a while, and this may manifest as a "pins and needles" sensation, or as "numbness", a "woody" or "woolly" sensation. It may take several weeks or months for sensation to return to the lower lip. You will remain on follow up if this happens.

### *Infection*

You may be prescribed antibiotics to prevent infection of the wounds. Smoking delays healing and impairs the body's capacity to heal. Try to give up smoking two weeks before, and one week after surgery. If there is doubt about your healing, call the office and we shall gladly see you for a follow up. Reduce the chances of infection by regular daily salt mouth baths from the day after surgery. Dissolve a teaspoon of table salt in 6 oz. of boiling water, and when cool enough to avoid burning your lip, hold the warm solution in the mouth next to the incisions for three minutes, and repeat this four times daily for 5 days.

### *Dry Socket*

Following extractions, particularly lower teeth, if you get severe pain that is accompanied by foul breath. This is a dry socket. Please return to the office to get the socket rinsed and medicated.

### *Sinus communication*

If you feel liquid going into the nose when you drink. This may indicate an opening between

### *Swelling*

Facial swelling affects the cheeks mostly and, if indicated, steroids may be prescribed to minimise the swelling of oral surgery. The swelling is likely to settle after a few days, but it is another reason for staying off work after surgery.

If you do have any questions about your care or about the instructions themselves, please feel free to call the office (604) 532-9040 or Dr. Garrett's cell (778)689-5802