

TAKE HOME INSTRUCTIONS

Now that your oral surgery is completed, follow these procedures to make yourself more comfortable, promote healing and help prevent any possible complications.

- First half hour: Make sure the gauze remains in place. Do not touch it with your tongue or fingers.
- **PLEASE REFRAIN FROM SMOKING THE DAY OF SURGERY!**

- When you get home: 30 minutes after surgery, wash hands thoroughly and remove gauze. Apply an ice bag or cold towel to your cheek or jaw -- 20 minutes off until bedtime. Continue in the morning until **24 hours** have passed since surgery.



- 12 hours after surgery: Dissolve exactly one level teaspoonful of salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water (not hot). Allow water to remain in your mouth, but do not rinse vigorously because this may dislodge the blood clot and possibly delay healing. Use the entire glass of solution for rinsing. If wound is in the lower jaw, tilt your head back and to the side. If in the upper jaw, use gentle force and hold it for at least 30 seconds. Rinse three times a day for five days. It is important to use the precise salt solution described above because this corresponds to the normal saline content of your saliva and promotes cleansing and healing. Rinsing flushes away food particles which may be lodged around the surgery site.



- First 2 or 3 days: Suck on ice chips or crushed ice. This thins out the saliva, keeps the surgery site cold and helps reduce swelling. Rest as much as possible. Lie down with your head elevated by one or two pillows. Please refrain from using a straw.



- Nausea: Take one ounce of a carbonated drink, such as ginger ale, every hour for five or six hours; or a pinch of salt with bicarbonate of soda in a glass of water. Then drink mild tea, clear broth and soft foods before resuming your regular diet.



- **Oozing:** A little bleeding or oozing is normal. If simple bleeding continues after you have removed the gauze, it can be controlled by simple pressure. Apply to wound area a roll of gauze or cotton about one inch thick, or large enough so you can apply light pressure when your mouth is closed. Do this for about twenty minutes and repeat if necessary.


- **Persistent bleeding:** Soak a small cotton ball in strong tea and place it firmly on the bleeding area. On top of this, place a gauze pad or another cotton ball and apply pressure by bringing the teeth together. Or simply bite on a moistened tea bag for twenty minutes. Apply an ice bag or cold towel compress to the cheek and lie down with your head elevated on three pillows.


- **Swelling:** After 24 hours, if there is swelling or jaw stiffness, apply moist heat to the outside of your face using a warm, moist dressing. If you use a hot water bottle or heating pad, first coat the skin with petroleum jelly. Then put on a thin towel and finally apply heat. **Do not use heat continuously!** Only twenty minutes out of every hour.


- **Stiff jaw:** Chew gum at intervals, especially while applying wet heat on jaw. This helps relax tension and brings relief.
- **Sharp bony edges:** If you feel something hard when you place your tongue on the surgical site, you may think it is part of the tooth. This is the hard, bony wall which originally supported the tooth. Leave it alone and it will heal nicely.
- **Diet:** A nutritionally balanced diet is very important. During the first 24 hours, eat soups and soft foods which are easily chewed and swallowed. Meats, vegetables and fresh fruit can be liquefied in a blender. Gradually progress to solid food. Don't skip meals. If you take nourishment regularly, you'll feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. Take any prescribed food supplement as directed. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal diet and take medication as usual.

