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## **POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **DISCOMFORT AND MEDICATIONS:** Periodontal Surgery, like other surgical procedures, may be associated with varying degrees of discomfort. This depends on the procedure involved and individual differences. If you have been given any prescriptions, it is usually best to take the first dose while the surgical site is still numb.
2. **BLEEDING:** You may notice slight bleeding from the surgical site. This type of minor bleeding for one or two days is not unusual and is not a major concern. If at any time you notice the formation of large blood clots or an obvious flow of blood which is more than a slight ooze, please call the office.
3. **SUTURES:** Sutures ("stitches") are placed to hold the gingival tissues in the proper position for ideal healing. If sutures were placed, your doctor will usually want you to return so that they can be fully removed once sufficient healing has occurred. **Do not disturb the sutures with your tongue, toothbrush or in any other manner since displacement will impair healing.** If you notice that a suture has come out or come loose, notify your dentist.
4. **DRESSING:** A periodontal dressing is often used to cover the surgical site for one to two weeks after surgery. The dressing is placed around your teeth to protect the surgical area and should not be disturbed. If small pieces become lost, and you have no discomfort, there is no cause for concern. If small pieces break off or if the entire dressing becomes loose in the first 2-4 days, please contact your dentist.
5. **DIET:** For your comfort and to protect the surgical site, a soft diet is recommended. Avoid chewing in the area of surgery. Avoid spicy, hard, fibrous, or "sharp" foods (such as corn chips) as these may be uncomfortable or dislodge the periodontal dressing. **Drink plenty of fluids.** It is important to maintain a diet with a normal calorie level that is high in protein, minerals and vitamins to support post-operative healing. Eat as normal a diet as possible. **POST SURGICALLY IS NOT THE TIME TO START A DIET**, since this can have detrimental effects on healing and lessen the chances of success of the surgical therapy.
6. **ORAL HYGIENE:** Continue to brush and floss the teeth, which were not involved in the surgery (or covered by the periodontal dressing). **The surgical area should not be disturbed for the first week post-operatively.** However you may rinse gently with salt water or with a mouthwash if prescribed by the doctor. After your sutures have been removed, generally after 1 week, you should lightly clean the teeth using a soft toothbrush or as instructed by the doctor. The gentle application of a fluoride gel with your toothbrush will also help to control plaque.
7. **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:** Avoid strenuous physical activity during your immediate recovery period, usually 2 to 3 days.

8. **SWELLING:** Some light swelling of the operated area is not unusual and may begin after the surgery. An ice pack may be used to minimize swelling. Ice should be placed in a plastic bag and then wrapped in a thin cloth towel and applied directly over the surgical area. You should maintain the towel wrapped ice pack in contact with the skin as much as possible for the first 24 hours after surgery (15 minutes on, 15 minutes off). You should also keep your head elevated above the level of your heart during the first 24 hours after surgery. This may necessitate the use of several pillows to support your head and upper body while sleeping.  
If swelling occurs, it usually disappears after several days. Applying moist heat to the swollen area will help the swelling resolve; **however, heat should not be applied until at least, 1-2 days after surgery.** Any unusual or large swelling should be reported to your periodontist at once.
9. **SMOKING:** All smoking should be stopped until after your sutures have been removed to ensure the best healing and success of your surgical procedure. **Healing results are significantly worse in smokers than in non-smokers.**
10. **ALCOHOL:** All intake of alcohol should be stopped until after your sutures have been removed and minimized for the next several weeks after suture removal to enhance healing. The combination of alcohol and certain pain medications is not recommended.
11. **DO NOT'S:** For the next several days, do **NOT** spit, smoke, rinse hard, drink through a straw, create a "sucking" action in your mouth, use a commercial mouthwash, drink carbonated soda, or use an oral irrigating device.
12. **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**  
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If you have any questions or problems, please contact the office (301) 498-5320.