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Oral Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

- **Some degree of discomfort and pain can persist for several days.** Take the prescribed pain medicine as soon as possible. Verify your medications' dosage and keep track of the amount and frequency of your medication intake. It is suggested to have food before or while ingesting pain medicine to curb gastrointestinal distress.
- **Do not disturb the surgical site.** For the first 3 days after surgery, avoid smoking, vigorous chewing, spitting, sucking, forceful rinsing, and strenuous physical activity, and alcohol use as this may delay healing, rupture the clot, cause an infection or a painful dry socket.
- **Expect minor bleeding or oozing from the surgical site.** This may continue for 2 days. For the first hour after surgery, maintain firm pressure on the surgical site by firmly biting on the gauze placed in your mouth at the office. You may replace the gauze after 30 minutes. If the site is still actively bleeding and the gauze is soaked with bright red blood, firmly bite on new gauze or a moist tea bag wrapped in gauze for 30 minutes. Firm pressure for 30 minutes usually controls prolonged bleeding. Do not sleep or eat with gauze in your mouth.
- **If profuse, active bleeding persists or recurs** or if blood is pooling in your mouth after firmly biting on gauze for the recommended time, please call the office or go directly to a hospital emergency room.
- **Swelling, inflammation, and pain usually develop during the first 12-24 hours following surgery.** This often increases on the second to third day and is usually the peak of your postoperative discomfort.
- **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)** like ibuprofen or naproxen will best alleviate swelling and pain if you can take them. If possible, you can combine an NSAID with acetaminophen to further mitigate discomfort since they work on different pain pathways. This combination has been proven to be safer and more effective than narcotics.
- **Placing an ice pack or a bag of frozen vegetables** on your face for 15 minutes on then 15 minutes off during the first 2-3 hours following the surgery may reduce swelling as well.
- **Soft, cool foods that require little or no chewing are recommended.** Eating can prevent nausea sometimes associated with certain medications. Do not chew anything until the numbness wears off. Avoid nuts, chips, popcorn, and any foods with seeds.
- **Take any regularly scheduled medication** (for diabetes, high blood pressure, etc.) on your regular schedule unless advised to do otherwise.
- **Do not operate a motor vehicle** if you have taken medication that makes you drowsy or incapacitated.