



1830 14th Avenue South * Birmingham, Alabama 35205
(205) 933-5511

POST-SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

Care of the Mouth

Begin gentle brushing the day after the surgery unless otherwise instructed. Brushing should be limited to above the gum line in the treated areas in the first week. You may begin flossing and brushing along the gum line after about 7 days. Remember that a little bleeding upon brushing is normal for the first few days. You can use warm salt water rinses 3-4 times per day and an over-the-counter rinse (such as Listerine) as well. You should use your prescription mouthrinse (such as Peridex or Periogard) if one was prescribed.

Surgical Dressing (Bandage)

Occasionally, we will place a pink surgical dressing over the treated gums. These areas should not be brushed or flossed until the dressing falls off, or is removed by the dentist. Do not be concerned if the dressing falls off or becomes loose. Healing will progress normally with or without the dressing.

Swelling

You should apply ice in the first 24-48 hours to the outside of your face as much as possible to decrease swelling. Ice packs can be applied at 20-30 minute intervals. Ice and cold, sugarless drinks may also help with swelling. Occasionally, swelling may lead to bruising or discoloration of the face or neck – do not be concerned. Moist heat may help to reduce the bruise after 72 hours post-surgery. Many times swelling will peak on the third day – this is normal.

Bleeding

Some oozing of blood is expected in the first few post-surgical hours. In cases of excessive or continuous bleeding, the application of firm pressure is most effective. Place a tea bag wrapped in a clean napkin or gauze over the bleeding area, and apply continuous finger pressure for 20 minutes by the clock. Ice may also decrease bleeding.

Discomfort

You may be numb for several hours after surgery. After that time, be patient, and allow your medication to take effect.

- Moderate discomfort – Take Anaprox (Naproxen) if prescribed, or your normal headache remedy. Tylenol or Motrin are often very effective.
- Severe discomfort – Take Vicodin (Hydrocodone) or other prescribed medication. Do not operate a motor vehicle or heavy machinery while taking this medicine.

Diet

Adequate nutrition is essential for healing. Eat a soft, bland diet for the first few days. Avoid sweets and citric acid products due to tooth sensitivity. Sodas are often acidic and should likely be avoided. It is good to take a multi-vitamin if a balanced diet cannot be maintained. Above all **AVOID SMOKING** as this causes the majority of post-operative complications.

Sutures

Usually, dissolving sutures are placed. These will work loose and fall out in the first week, in general. Occasionally sutures will remain, and they will be removed at your first follow-up visit. Do not worry if some sutures come out early. On some procedures, non-dissolving sutures are used. Please do not remove these yourself.

In cases of true emergencies that cannot be handled during regular office hours, you may reach Dr. Duckett at home at (205) 968-4047 or (205) 999-4465.