



## Post-Operative Instructions for Dental Surgery

Most surgical procedures create a triad of side effects: swelling, bleeding and pain. Our goal is to reduce all three of these side effects to very low, tolerable levels. Most pain and swelling are caused from infection or inflammation. The medications we give you are designed to decrease both infection and inflammation.

### Prescribed Medications

A non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen, Motrin, Lodine, Anaprox or Celebrex is prescribed to most patients to help decrease swelling and lessen discomfort. A common side effect of some anti-inflammatory medications and antibiotics is an upset stomach. This can be worse if you take your medications on an empty stomach. After surgery do not take medications on an empty stomach. Drink at least 4-8 ounces of water and eat something with each dose of medication. Any oral medication will need approximately 20 minutes to take effect.

A narcotic pain reliever such as Ultracet, Ultram or tramadol, is often prescribed. If your pain is mild, you do not need to take the pain reliever. If your pain is severe, it is best to schedule a dose of the pain reliever, alternating between the doses of anti-inflammatory medication.

**DO NOT** take the pain reliever at the same time you take the anti-inflammatory.

*For example:* If you are taking an anti-inflammatory every six hours, with your first dose being at 6am and second dose being at 12pm; you would take the narcotic pain reliever at 9am and 3pm (three hours after the anti-inflammatory dose). Alternating in this manner means you are taking medication every 3 hours. This will help to better manage the pain and also help lessen the possibility for an upset stomach as well as constipation.

If your pain is moderate and you are not getting adequate relief from the anti-inflammatory alone, but you would prefer not to take a pain reliever; you may substitute acetaminophen (Tylenol) for the narcotic pain reliever and take that between the doses of anti-inflammatory medication to see if this provides adequate relief for you. Please do not mix any other over the counter medications with the ones prescribed as there are many potential problems that can occur with a mixture of seemingly innocent medications

### Take the antibiotic as prescribed.

**DO NOT** take antibiotics at the same time as taking other medications, as this increases the potential for nausea. Take your antibiotic at least 30 minutes apart from your anti-inflammatory or narcotic medication. Be aware that antibiotics can interfere with oral contraceptives and appropriate precautions should be taken.

### Discomfort

The cold packs are best for immediate pain relief. If you wake in the middle of the night in pain, reach for a cold pack then decide what medication to take. Any oral medication will take 20 minutes to work - a cold pack will work immediately. A sore throat that can persist for several days is common after any oral surgery. Using Chloraseptic Sore Throat Spray can often provide relief to a sore throat.

### Swelling

For the first 24 hours after surgery apply a cold pack to the face near the surgical area, holding it gently against the skin for 15-20 minutes, then return it to the freezer for 15-20 minutes. This alternating schedule of "20 minutes on" and "20 minutes off" should be done as often as possible during the first 24 hours. This will help to reduce swelling and discomfort. After the 24 hours has passed, you can use it when you feel it is soothing or provides relief.

It is not unusual to have some swelling and/or discoloration in the surgical area. Swelling may continue to increase for 2-3 days after surgery then after 3-5 days the swelling will begin to go down. Remember, swelling does not mean that you have an infection; it is a normal post-surgical occurrence. If you have a temperature over 100 degrees or breathing is hampered, please call Dr. Glover. A low grade temperature below 100 degrees is normal as well.

### Dressing

With some surgical procedures we occasionally use a dressing around the teeth. Its purpose is to protect the surgical area. We will let you know after your procedure if a surgical dressing has been placed. If you have a surgical dressing, **DO NOT TOUCH, TAMPER WITH, OR DISLUDGE THE DRESSING.** It is normal for small pieces of dressing to come off from time to time after surgery. This will not harm anything or hamper healing so there is no need for alarm, however; if the dressing causes you discomfort in any way, please call the office so we can modify it. In most cases, we will remove the dressing at the first post operative appointment, which is typically two weeks after surgery.



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## **Bleeding**

Seeing traces of blood in your saliva for several hours after surgery is normal and may continue for up to 24 hours.

**DO NOT** vigorously rinse your mouth, as this will dislodge blood clots and encourage the bleeding to continue. If you discover a specific site of bleeding, a moist tea bag may be used as a compress against the tissue by gently holding pressure in place for 15 minutes. The tannic acid in standard black tea will often stop the bleeding. If you discover there is still some bleeding after 15 minutes of the tea bag compress, repeat the process and increase the time to 30 minutes. You can do this a third time for up to 45 minutes. If the three attempts with the tea bag compress does not stop the bleeding, please call Dr. Glover at the office or after hours emergency number.

## **Rinsing**

**DO NOT** vigorously rinse your mouth for 24 hours or at any time after 24 hours that you have bleeding. This can dislodge blood clots that are trying to form. Once 24 hours has passed, you will use either the prescribed mouth rinse given to you at the time of surgery or warm salt water (8 oz. glass of warm tap water and a teaspoon of salt). Even after surgery, do not swish vigorously; instead; gently bathe the surgical area(s) with the liquid. Do not use any mouth rinse other than what the salt water rinse or prescription rinse. Many other rinses contain alcohol, which can dry tissue and impair healing. If you were given an antioxidant rinse or gel on the day of your surgery, it is important to use it as instructed. The antioxidant rinses we provide play an important role in your healing process.

The antibacterial rinse given to patients on the day of surgery should be used twice a day, for 30 seconds after breakfast and before bed. It is important not to eat or drink for at least 30 minutes after use to allow the antibacterial properties to work properly and undisturbed. Sometimes this product can cause superficial stain on the enamel surface, but this is easily polished off at any of your post operative visits. Failure to use the rinse increases the possibility for infection to occur.

## **Oral Hygiene**

**DO NOT** use a toothbrush, floss, Waterpik, or other interdental cleaning devices on or near the surgical site until after your first post operative appointment, which is typically 2 weeks after surgery.

**DO brush your teeth and tongue and floss all of your teeth not involved in the surgery.** Although we want you to stay away from the surgical area, it is important to keep the rest of your mouth clean.

DO use the oral rinse or gel as instructed until Dr. Glover advises you to discontinue their use. Sutures will begin to come out in 7-14 days. Any loose sutures will be trimmed or removed at your first post-operative appointment. At your first post-operative appointment, Dr. Glover will determine if it is okay to begin brushing the surgical site and will likely provide you with a special, feather-soft toothbrush to use for several weeks.

Dr. Glover will keep you informed at your post-operative visits and let you know when normal brushing and flossing can resume. It is important that you maintain as high a level of oral hygiene as possible. The cleaner your mouth is the better your healing after surgery will be.

## **Activity**

Refrain from physical activity the day of the surgical procedure. It would be preferable to keep activity light for 3 days after surgery. If you enjoy strenuous physical exercise, refrain for at least 3 days after surgery. Strenuous physical activity increases blood flow and blood pressure, increasing the possibility of spontaneous bleeding.

Airplane travel is permitted 24 hours after surgery and will not impact your surgical healing or comfort.

## **Sensitivity**

Depending on the surgery performed, teeth may be sensitive to hot, cold, or sweets. This sensitivity usually diminishes slowly as healing occurs. For patients having surgery to treat periodontal disease, be aware that the teeth in the areas affected by the surgery may appear somewhat longer, or in some cases shorter, since the gum tissue has been moved. This may also result in spaces between the teeth resulting in food lodging between teeth. This can be gently removed with floss or a toothpick.



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## Soft Tissue (Gingival or Gum) Grafts

After soft tissue grafting surgery, you typically wear a surgical stint custom made to fit firmly against the roof of your mouth. This protects the wound on the roof of the mouth, provides comfort, and applies pressure to help control bleeding. If bleeding occurs, use your thumb to press on the stint and apply pressure for 15 minutes. If there is still bleeding, apply pressure again with your thumb for 30 minutes, trying to move it directly over the area where bleeding is occurring. If the bleeding starts up again you can repeat and increase the time to 45 minutes. Make sure that your head is elevated when you are applying pressure. If this does not completely stop the bleeding, remove the stint, and apply the same pressure to the roof of the mouth with a wet tea bag once under control replace the stint. If you are still bleeding at this point, call Dr. Glover at the office or the after hour emergency number.

**DO NOT** remove the stint for 24 hours following surgery. After 24 hours, remove the stint, clean it with your toothbrush, and place it back in your mouth. Continue wearing the stint at all times until your first post-operative visit (usually two weeks after surgery). If you find the stint to be uncomfortable to the point of hindering daily activities, contact the office to speak with a surgical assistant.

**DO NOT** use a toothbrush on the teeth where soft tissue grafting was done until Dr. Glover instructs you to do so. At your post-operative visit, you will be given a special toothbrush with instructions at the appropriate time. It is imperative to the healing process that you do not disturb the soft tissue graft.

**DO** brush and floss the rest of your teeth. Plaque bacterial build up in other areas of your mouth can lead to poor healing and failure of the soft tissue graft. Keeping your mouth clean and healthy is vital to your healing process

**DO NOT**, trim any sutures on grafted teeth. These sutures are very delicate in nature and are done in such a manner that what may seem like an innocent trim can cause the entire suture to loosen and the graft can be compromised to failure.

*As your soft tissue graft heals, the tissue will appear to turn white, red. This is normal and there is no cause for alarm.*

## POST-SURGICAL DIETARY SUGGESTIONS

Consume only clear liquids for the first 24 hours if you are prone to post-operative nausea. Otherwise, a "soft" diet is recommended, eating small amounts every 2-4 hours so you are not taking medications or supplements on an empty stomach.

You will continue this soft diet for 48 hours. If you can eat on the other side staying away from the surgical site you can resume a normal diet after 48 hours. If both sides of your mouth are involved you must continue this soft diet for 2 weeks. It is very important that you take all the vitamins recommend on the pre-operative instructions

A good diet favorably impacts healing and helps you feel better. We recommend drinking high protein diet supplements (20+grams/drink) and drinking at least 8 large glasses of water per day for 2 weeks after surgery. You should have at least 0.36 grams/pound/day of protein. (Example: a 150 pound person=54 grams of protein/day).

**Ready to Drink Protein Shakes or Powdered Protein Shakes:** whey, soy or vegetable blends

**Dairy Products:** Plain whole milk, skim milk, buttermilk, yogurt, soft or grated cheese

**Juice:** Fruit juices (except those with sugar added), Gatorade

**Soup:** All soups including vegetable, cream soups made with milk, and bouillon.

**Pasta:** All kinds

**Eggs:** Soft boiled, scrambled, poached, or in omelets. (Use cheese for extra nutrients)

**Meats:** Ground meat or finely minced, or in the form of broth

**Fish:** Creamed tuna, salmon, shellfish (minced), fish loafs and the like

**Vegetables:** Mashed or baked potatoes, pureed vegetables, or vegetable juices, etc.

**Fruits:** Bananas, stewed fruits, and pureed fruits

**Dr. Glover's Emergency Telephone Numbers:** Office: 214-691-5593 Cell: 214-552-5593