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POST OPERATIVE ORAL SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

You have just undergone surgery and your body needs time to heal. Take it easy for the next three days and get plenty of rest. It's important to drink plenty of liquids (8 tall glasses of liquid a day) and eat a nutritious diet. Liquids like Ensure, Slim-Fast, Powerade, and Gatorade have good electrolyte replacements and can serve as meal replacements for the first day after surgery. Take any medications the dentist prescribed to you within the first 2 hours after you leave the office to lessen any post-op pain. Make sure you finish any antibiotics the dentist may have prescribed to you even if you start feeling better.

The first 36 hours **do not** swish liquids in your mouth, drink through a straw, spit, or anything else that causes suction, which could dislodge the clot and cause bleeding to continue. **AVOID** smoking and drinking alcohol for five days after surgery. Smoking and alcohol will prolong healing and could cause the post-surgery experience to be extremely painful since they disrupt the clot formation and can lead to a "dry socket". A "dry socket" can be an extremely painful experience where the only cure is to ride-it-out and let the body heal itself. You will know if you are experiencing a "dry socket" when the first 3 days after surgery the pain subsides, and on the 3rd or 4th day after surgery, the pain intensifies.

After the first 36 hours, you can start eating a diet your comfortable with and rinsing your mouth at least 6 times a day for the next 4 days with warm salt water.

Bleeding is normal after oral surgery. Keep the gauze pack in your mouth for at least 30 minutes after placement. Do not be concerned if you notice bright red blood in your saliva for the next 3 days. If blood still is oozing from the surgical site after you remove the gauze, then you should try biting on more gauze or a moist tea bag for an hour while lying down.

Swelling is normal after oral surgery, but the more complex the surgery, the more swelling expected. To help reduce the swelling and post-op pain, you can place an ice pack against the outside of your face adjacent to the surgical site for 20 minutes, then off for 20 minutes. Repeat for the first 24 hours as needed. After 24 hours, you can apply a heat pack in a similar manner. You may have increased swelling for up to 2-3 days and by the 5th day the swelling will begin to fade.