

Post Operative Instructions: Endodontic Surgery

1. Do not lift or pull on the lip to examine the area too early...this may cause tearing out of the sutures, irritations, and delay of healing.
2. Slight swelling and skin discoloration is normal. **Minimize swelling by placing an ice pack over the area for 20 minutes on, 10 minutes off for the next 6 hours** and no longer. The cooling effect of ice helps to constrict the blood vessels to the area to prevent bleeding, fluid buildup from inflammation, and to help control post-op pain. Disposable ice packs will be given to you at the appointment to get you home. Continue the cooling by making your own ice packs at home by using Zip-Lock bags full of ice, wrapped in a cloth. Pre-frozen blue "chemical packs" used in coolers or frozen food packs also work well.
3. **Try to rest as much as possible after surgery.** Do not attempt physical exertion at work or play, for these activities will raise blood pressure resulting in increased bleeding, swelling, and pain. While sleeping or resting, place pillows behind your head and neck to slightly elevate your head. Avoid bending over and lifting heavy items the first day.
4. **Do not smoke or drink alcohol for the first 24 hours.** Sucking or "dragging" on a cigarette causes a negative pressure in your mouth and enhances bleeding. The chemicals in smoke and alcoholic beverages delay healing.
5. **Avoid any vigorous rinsing of your mouth for the first 24 hours**, so that the surgical area will be able to form a blood clot and initiate healing. After the first day, gentle rinsing with warm salt water after meals and at bedtime will keep the area clean and help to reduce any swelling that may have occurred. **Do not brush directly over the area to protect the sutures and maintain closure of the surgical site.** A mouth rinse by prescription is sometimes given to help keep the area clean. After 3 or 4 days, you can begin to lift the lip to gently wipe the area clean using a Q-Tip and a mouthwash. If any stinging occurs with either the salt water rinses or mouthwashes, dilute them with water until comfortable. Do not use baking soda/peroxide combinations, for they may ulcerate the tissues. Do not floss the area for about 10 days.
6. Surgical barriers or pastes may be placed in the site during the procedure. Some exposure of these materials during healing is normal. Maintain good oral hygiene to prevent formation of infection around these materials so healing will proceed normally.
7. **Good nutrition is important for a rapid recovery.** Maintain adequate fluid intake, particularly if the weather is hot and if you have been prescribed medications. Maintain a diet high in protein and vitamin C for enhanced healing. Use soft foods (eggs, soup, ice cream, yogurt, Jell-O, etc.) and try to chew on the other side of the mouth. Avoid crunchy and crusty foods like chips, pretzels, carrots, celery that can tear the soft tissues of the surgical site. Very warm foods/drinks and carbonated beverages should be avoided the first few days after surgery. Sports/body building and breakfast drinks (i.e. Nutriment, Carnation Instant Breakfast) are nutritionally complete and provide fluid intake as well.

What to Expect Following the Procedure

1. Some discomfort will usually be present for a few days, severe pain rarely occurs. Over the counter analgesics and anti-inflammatory medications are usually suggested. Prescribed medications for pain or infection may be given to you. Follow the directions printed on the prescription(s) for when and how many pills to take.

2. Some minor bleeding or oozing may occur after surgery for the first 24 hours, particularly after the local anesthetic has worn off. This is normal. If bleeding persists beyond this time, or is severe, please call the office/answering service.
3. Slight swelling and discoloration will occur, and is unfortunately normal. Expect the swelling to increase for 2 to 3 days, and then subside. Swelling will usually appear increased each morning. This is a normal part of the healing process.
4. There is often a temporary loss of feeling in the involved area. This returns in a few weeks after surgery.
5. The tooth or teeth involved may feel loose for a time. They will tighten up as the area heals.
6. You will be seen in approximately one week for the sutures to be removed. Some sutures may fall out on their own prior to this appointment because they will gradually self-dissolve. Post-op checks will be later scheduled to periodically evaluate healing for up to a year.

THE PROPER CARE FOLLOWING SURGICAL PROCEDURES WILL HASTEN RECOVERY AND PREVENT COMPLICATIONS.

SHOULD ANY CONDITION ARISE WHICH CAUSES CONCERN OR CONFUSION, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE FOR ADVICE, FURTHER INSTRUCTION, OR EMERGENCY CARE. OUR ANSWERING/PAGER SERVICE PROVIDES A 24 HOUR RESPONSE.

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