**Post Operative Oral Surgery Instructions**

**Charles George VA Medical Center – Dental Clinic**

If you have any questions regarding the instructions listed below, please contact the Dental Clinic at (828) 299 – 2513, Monday – Friday, 07:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Clinic staff are available to answer calls until 4:00 p.m. Clinic Walk-in hours are Monday – Friday: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Bleeding:

* Some bleeding is normal. Bite down on the gauze for 1 hour following surgery. Change gauze as needed per your Dentist’s verbal instructions.
* **DO NOT** spit for the first **24** hours. Please swallow your saliva.
* Sleep with your head elevated on two pillows (or recliner) for the first **24** hours.
* **DO NOT** use a straw for one week.
* **DO NOT** drink alcoholic beverages or carbonated beverages such as Sprite®, ginger ale, seltzer, and dark sodas (cola and root beer) for the first 24 hours.
* If bleeding is excessive or won’t stop, go directly to the CGVAMC dental clinic or emergency department. If you are in an emergent situation, you may also go to your nearest emergency department. In this event, you or a family member should telephone the 72 Hour Notification Hotline at (844) 724 – 7842 within 72 hours of arriving at the non-VA emergency department. The hotline is open 24/7 and on federal holidays. If you have questions for the CGVAMC emergency department, please telephone (828) 298 – 7911, extension 2511 or extension 2599.

Smoking:

* **DO NOT** smoke for at least 1 week following surgery.

Hygiene:

* **DO NOT** spit for the first **24** hours; please swallow saliva.
* After 24 hours, you may rinse your mouth with salt water. **DO NOT rinse vigorously. The day after surgery, after 8:00 p.m. begin rinsing your mouth with warm salt water 2-3 times daily for the next 2 weeks.**
* **DO NOT** use any mouthwash products for 7 – 10 days (for example, Listerine, etc.).
* Resume brushing on the evening of your surgery. Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush and do not swish and spit. Let the spit run out of your mouth into the sink. A clean mouth will heal faster!

Swelling:

* For the first 2 days following surgery: Place a washcloth on your face and then place an ice bag on top of the washcloth and over your jaw for 20 minutes at a time (20 minutes on, then 20 minutes off) to reduce swelling and pain.
* On the third day after surgery, stop using ice and use a warm moist compress instead.
* It is normal for the swelling to increase for the first 2-3 days following surgery.

Sutures:

* Most sutures (stitches) we use will dissolve. If we do not use the dissolvable sutures, we will schedule you to return to the clinic in 7 – 10 days after surgery to have them removed.

Pain:

* Take your pain medication right away and take as directed. If instructed to take ibuprofen, take it as directed and on time. **DO NOT** wait until you have pain.

Diet:

* For the first week following surgery eat soft foods, such as (warm, not hot) soup, yogurt, applesauce, or pasta.

Infection:

* If you were prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed until finished.
* Signs of infection: swelling, redness, fever (greater than 100.4), increased pain and drainage. If these occur, go directly to the CGVAMC dental clinic or emergency department. If you are in an emergent situation, you may also go to your nearest emergency department. In this event, you or a family member should telephone the 72 Hour Notification Hotline at (844) 724 – 7842 within 72 hours of arriving at the non-VA emergency department. The hotline is open 24/7 and on federal holidays. If you have questions for the CGVAMC emergency department, please telephone (828) 298 – 7911, extension 2511 or extension 2599.
* Stop taking any newly prescribed medication immediately if you have a bad reaction like a rash, itching, swelling, or nausea. Call the dental clinic at (828) 299 – 2513 for further instructions.

Other Concerns:

* If you have an emergency at night, after clinic hours, or on weekends, go to the emergency room.

**Instructions for Patients with Sinus Communications**

Until your sinus communications (a hole between the roof of your mouth and maxillary sinus) is completely healed, you should **NOT**:

* Blow your nose
* Use straws to drink
* Sneeze or cough. (If this happens, please do so with your mouth wide open.)
* Smoke
* If you notice liquids going into your nose when you drink something, **DO NOT** panic. This is normal and will usually resolve on its own by following the above directions. Follow up with your Dentist as directed.

If you have questions, please call the dental clinic at (828) 299 – 2513 for further instructions.



Approved by the Veteran Education Workgroup: February 2022