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SURGICAL POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

1. **DISCOMFORT AND MEDICATIONS:** Periodontal surgery, like other surgical procedures, may be associated with varying degrees of discomfort. This depends on the procedure involved and individual differences. If analgesics have been prescribed, it is usually recommended to take the first dose while the surgical site is still anesthetized (“numb”). All medication should be taken as strictly prescribed. The interval between taking the medications and the total length of time that you are to remain on your medications has been carefully determined to give you the maximum benefit with minimum use of drugs. Variation from the prescribed regime can affect healing and the success of your procedure. Some patients experience jaw joint pain after being open for periods of time, you may take an anti-inflammatory medicine (ibuprofen) to ease discomfort and possible addition of an ice pack.
2. **BLEEDING:** You may notice slight bleeding from the surgical site. This type of minor bleeding for one or two days is not unusual and is not a major concern. If at any time you notice the formation of large blood clots or any obvious flow of blood which is more than light ooze, notify your doctor at once.
3. **SWELLING:** Some slight swelling of the operated area is not unusual. Often, if deemed helpful, a medicine will be prescribed to minimize swelling. An ice pack may be used to minimize swelling. Ice should be placed in a plastic bag and then wrapped in a cloth towel and applied directly over the surgical area. You should maintain the towel wrapped ice pack in contact with the skin for 15 minute intervals with 15 minutes off, for the first 24 hours after surgery. You should also keep your head elevated above the level of your heart during the first 24 hours after surgery. This may necessitate the use of several pillows to support your head and upper body while sleeping. If swelling occurs, it usually disappears after several days. Applying moist heat to the swollen area will help the swelling resolve, however, **heat should not be applied until at least 1-2 days after surgery.** Any unusual or large swelling should be reported to your periodontist at once.
4. **SUTURES:** Sutures (“Stitches”) are placed to hold the gingival tissues in the proper position for ideal healing. If sutures (“Stitches”) were placed, your periodontist may have you return so that they can be fully removed once sufficient healing has occurred, if they are not resorbable. **Do not disturb the sutures with your tongue, toothbrush or in any other manner since**

displacement will impair healing. If you notice that a suture has come out or come loose, notify your periodontist during regular office hours.

5. **DIET:** For your comfort and to protect the surgical area, a soft diet is recommended. Avoid chewing in the area of surgery. **Chew food on the opposite side of the mouth where a procedure was performed.** Avoid hard, fibrous or “sharp” foods (such as corn chips) as these may be uncomfortable and can dislodge the periodontal dressing or gingival tissues. Drink plenty of liquids, **BUT AVOID USING A STRAW.** It is important to maintain a diet with a normal calorie level that is high in protein, minerals and vitamins to support post-operative healing. Eat as normal but soft food diet.
6. **ORAL HYGIENE: DO NOT BRUSH OR FLOSS THE SURGICAL AREA.** Continue to brush and floss the teeth that were not involved in the surgery (or covered by the periodontal dressing). The surgical area should not be disturbed for the first week post-operatively. However, you may rinse gently with salt water or with a mouthwash if prescribed by your doctor **DO NOT SWISH FORCEFULLY.** After your sutures have been removed, generally after 1 week you can lightly clean the teeth with a soft toothbrush or as instructed by your doctor. The gentle application of a fluoride gel with your toothbrush will also help to control plaque.
7. **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:** Avoid strenuous physical activity during your immediate recovery period, usually 2 to 3 days.
8. **SMOKING:** All smoking should be stopped until after your sutures have been removed to ensure the best healing and success of your surgical procedure. Healing results are significantly worse in smokers than in non-smokers.
9. **ALCOHOL:** The combination of alcohol and certain pain medication is not recommended.
10. **DO NOT’S:** For the next several days, do NOT spit, use tobacco products, rinse hard, drink through a straw, create a “sucking” action in your mouth, use a commercial mouthwash, drink carbonated soda or use an oral irrigating device.
11. **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**
