

## Post-Operative Care after Periodontal Surgery

Wound healing in the mouth is less predictable because the muscles are constantly in motion with speaking, eating, and brushing. You can improve your healing, with fewer complications, if you follow these instructions carefully.

### ■ MEDICATIONS

Start medications (especially pain medications) as soon as possible after surgery.

\_\_\_ Complete the full course of prescribed antibiotics (e.g., amoxicillin, clindamycin, Augmentin, Z-pak etc.). To handle possible side effects:

- For antibiotic-related diarrhea, probiotic pills or yogurt may help.
- For allergic reactions such as a rash, stop the medication immediately, take an antihistamine (such as Benadryl), and call the office.

\_\_\_ Use antiseptic mouthwash (either lukewarm saltwater or a ½ cap of prescribed mouthwash) twice a day, **starting the morning after surgery**. Do not start on the day of surgery, and do not rinse vigorously; simply hold the mouthwash in your mouth for one minute, tilting your head so that it reaches the surgical site. Do not use peroxide.

\_\_\_ For over-the-counter pain medications, take every 3 hours **for the first 5 days**, alternating medications (see sample chart below). At bedtime, take the next medication even if 3 hours has not elapsed, but during sleep there is no need for medication unless you wake up with pain.

Continue this schedule for the first 5 days even if you're not in pain, as there is a normal “spike” in discomfort after several days, and pain is easier to prevent than to control once you have it. After the first 5 days you can taper the doses and take as needed.

7:00 am	10:00 am	1:00 pm	4:00 pm	7:00 pm	9:00 pm
2 Advil's	2 Tylenols*	2 Advil's	2 Tylenols*	2 Advil's	2 Tylenols*

\*You may take 1 extra-strength Tylenol instead of 2 regular-strength Tylenols.

1 Tylenol = 325 mg acetaminophen (1 Extra-Strength Tylenol = 500 mg)

1 Advil = 200 mg ibuprofen

\_\_\_ For prescribed pain medications, take as directed. If the medication is a narcotic (such as Tylenol-3, Vicodin, Percocet, or any medication containing codeine), do not drive.

### ■ SWELLING

Swelling is a normal part of the healing process, but to protect the sutures during the first 3 days of healing, swelling should be minimized using ice packs. Apply them gently to the outside of your face/jaw near the area of the surgery for 20 minutes off and on. Do not press hard or rub, as that would risk disturbing the surgical site. On the 4<sup>th</sup> day, switch to a warm moist towel, as at that point an increase in blood flow to the area would help with healing.

### ■ BLEEDING

A small amount of bleeding is normal, usually occurring on the day of surgery and sometimes over the next 3-4 days. If there is bleeding, you may apply gentle pressure continuously for 30-60 minutes, as follows:

- If the dressing is in place, use two fingers to apply even pressure across the dressing.
- If there is no dressing, you may place a cold, wet teabag or piece of gauze on the area and apply pressure by either biting down or using finger pressure.

Keep your head elevated. When you lie down, use extra pillows to keep your head raised.

Do not drink through a straw or spit or swish vigorously.

Do not exercise or do anything that increases your heart rate for 3 days / 7 days / 14 days.

## ■ **CLEANLINESS**

Do not use an electric toothbrush anywhere in your mouth until your follow-up visit. A manual toothbrush with a small amount (or no) toothpaste may be used for the rest of your mouth as well as floss. Do not brush or floss anywhere in or near the surgical site until tomorrow / 3 days / 1 week / 2 weeks / your follow-up visit. Do not rinse on the day of surgery. The morning after, you may rinse, but do so gently, as vigorous rinsing is the most common cause of surgical failure. For mouthwash, see instructions under MEDICATIONS.

Try not to stretch your cheek near the surgical site as this may pull on the sutures.

## ■ **FOOD**

For the first 24 hours do not eat HOT foods or HOT liquids, as this may increase the bleeding from the surgical site. Eat a soft diet such as pasta, meatloaf, fish, chicken, cooked vegetables, smoothies, or yogurt. Avoid crunchy foods such as hard breakfast cereal, hard-crust bread, raw vegetables, chips, popcorn, or nuts.

Chew on the opposite side of your mouth and cut your food into small pieces.

Eat a balanced diet and maintain adequate fluid intake. For better healing, eat or take pineapple / garlic / vitamin C / vitamin D / calcium / omega-3 / 81mg aspirin.

You will usually need to stay on a soft diet for 2-3 weeks but follow your doctor's instructions.

## ■ **SUTURES**

Do not tug or remove your sutures. Your doctor / staffs need to see you for your follow-up visit to evaluate your healing progress and, if needed, to remove your sutures. We used dissolvable / non-dissolvable sutures.

## ■ **DRESSING**

If a periodontal dressing has been applied, do not disturb it. It will likely come off before your follow-up visit, but this is not an emergency, and the dressing will not need to be replaced. If it does come off, do not pull on the sutures. If it is still in place at your follow-up visit, it will be removed at that time.

## ■ **SMOKING** Absolutely no smoking for 2 weeks (including e-cigarettes)

## ■ **REST** Avoid strenuous activity for 24 hours and get adequate rest without bending down.

## ■ **OTHER** (see items checked)

Avoid taking a look at the surgical site. (This is a common cause of surgical failure.)

Excessive bruising and swelling are expected.

Avoid blowing your nose and sneezing through your nose.

Your lips may feel tightened due to sutures.

Keep the surgical dressing on the graft site as long as you can.

I anticipate that some bone particulates may come out during the healing process.

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If you have any questions **during working hours**, please call **the office**: 603-215-5800.

Otherwise, please contact your doctor directly;

**Dr. Kwon: 603-757-3262    Dr. Yen :603-762-2496**

If leaving a voice message or sending a text message, please include **your name, your doctor's name, date of surgery, and treatment received**.