



AFTER YOUR PERIODONTAL SURGERY

**How to take care of your mouth**

Do not disturb the wound. Do not rinse vigorously or spit for the first week. Do not apply pressure with your tongue or fingers to the surgical area as the tissue may be movable during the initial healing. Do not lift or pull on the lip to look at the sutures. This can actually cause damage to the wound site and tear the sutures. Avoid foods or activities that create suction in the mouth (No smoking, drinking through straws, rinsing, etc). These activities may dislodge the newly formed clot, which may cause bleeding from your surgical site.

**Bleeding** - Some minor bleeding or redness in the saliva is normal for 24 hours. If this occurs you may apply a cool wet gauze to the area and apply pressure to the site. Exception: If you have received periodontal graft surgery, do not apply pressure to the graft.

**Bruising** - Minor bruising after surgery is a normal response and is no cause for alarm. It will improve in 7-14 days.

**Swelling** - Swelling is a normal occurrence after surgery. To minimize swelling, apply an ice pack (bag of crushed ice, bag of peas/corn, towel filled with ice) to the cheek in the area of surgery. Ice is most effective if applied for 20 minutes and then removed for 20 minutes in succession throughout the first day. You should rest or sleep with your head slightly elevated. If possible, try also to sleep on the side opposite the surgery. EXCEPTION: If you have received periodontal graft surgery, do not apply ice as this will cool the graft tissue and interfere with its healing.

**Stiffness** - Some jaw muscle stiffness is common, especially after longer procedures. This is normal and will improve in 7-14 days. After the first day, moist heat application with a warm wash cloth and Ibuprofen will help relieve some of these symptoms.

**Pain** - You should begin taking pain medication before you feel the local anesthetic wearing off. For moderate pain, take 400-600mg Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) every 4-6 hours. Alternately, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol), 500-1000mg every 4-6 hours. For severe pain, the prescribed medication should be taken as directed. Do not take any of the above medication if you are allergic, or have been instructed by your doctor not to take it. If you run out of medication please contact our office. Do not suffer needlessly in pain. If you are experiencing an adverse reaction to any of the medications, such as nausea, vomiting, a rash or severe stomach irritation, discontinue the medication and contact our office.

**Diet** - Avoid hot or spicy foods and beverages (coffee, tea, soup). Let food and drink cool before eating today. On the day of surgery most people find cool soft foods (ice cream, yogurt) soothing. A soft diet is advisable for the next few days. Avoid food with sharp edges such as chips, crackers, and toast and do not eat on the surgical side for the next two weeks.

**Oral Hygiene** - Good oral hygiene is essential to good healing. Once the bleeding has subsided (after the first day) begin gentle rinsing (not swishing) with chlorhexidine rinse (Peridex) twice per day for 30 seconds (after breakfast, before bedtime). Do this for the first week. Also, for the first two weeks, gently trace the surgical area and adjacent teeth with a Q-tip dipped in chlorhexidine. You may additionally rinse with warm salt water (½ tsp. salt to 8oz glass of water) between chlorhexidine rinses. You may use your toothbrush as you usually do to brush your natural teeth only. When brushing, avoid the surgical area for the next two weeks.

**Activity** - Keep physical activities to a minimum immediately following surgery. Avoid vigorous exercise and excessive talking for the next 3 days.

**Stitches** - The stitches used will dissolve on their own in approximately 14 days. Never pull at loose stitches or attempt to remove them yourself. If they persist after 2 weeks come to the office and we will remove them for you.

**Antibiotics** - Be sure to take the prescribed antibiotics as directed to help prevent infection.

**Smoking** - Do not smoke. Smoking greatly inhibits healing.

If followed, the above steps will aid in a speedy recovery. Do not hesitate to call: office 778-477-5554 Monday to Thursday 8:00 to 5:00 or Dr. Hallett's cell 250-215-1540 after hours.