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Post-Operative Instructions

1. **Discomfort and Medications:** Periodontal and dental implant surgery, like other surgical procedures, may be associated with varying degrees of discomfort. This depends on the procedure involved and individual differences. If pain medication has been prescribed, it is usually best to take the first dose while the surgical site is still anesthetized (“numb”). All medication should be taken strictly as prescribed. Variations from the prescribed regimen can affect healing and the success of your procedure.
2. **Bleeding:** You may notice slight bleeding from the surgical site. This type of minor bleeding for the first 4-6 hours is not unusual. If at any time you notice the formation of large blood clots or an obvious flow of blood which is more than a slight ooze, notify our office immediately.
3. **Sutures:** Sutures (“stitches”) are placed to hold the gum tissues in the proper position for ideal healing. Sutures will usually be removed approximately 1-2 weeks after the surgery. 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 our office during regular office hours.
4. **Dressing:** A periodontal dressing is often used to cover the surgical site for 1-2 weeks after the surgery. The dressing is placed around your teeth to protect the surgical area and should not be disturbed. If small pieces become lost, and you have no discomfort, there is no reason for concern. If larger pieces break off or if the entire dressing becomes loose in the first two days, please contact our office.
5. **Diet:** For your comfort and to protect the surgical area, a soft diet is recommended. Avoid chewing in the area of surgery. Avoid “sharp” foods (such as corn chips, pretzels) as these may be uncomfortable and can dislodge the periodontal dressing. Also, avoid foods or liquids that are hot in temperature. It is important to maintain a diet with a normal caloric intake level that is high in protein, vitamins and minerals to support post-operative healing. Diet supplements such as Carnation Instant Breakfast can provide an excellent source of protein and other nutrients needed for healing. Other suggested soft foods include soups, eggs, fruits and vegetables that are pureed in a blender, and soft meals such as fresh fruit and canned tuna. A “one-a-day” vitamin may also be taken to ensure adequate vitamin and mineral levels. **Post-surgery is not the time to start a diet!!!**
6. **Oral Hygiene:** Continue to brush and floss the teeth which were NOT involved in the surgery. The surgical area should not be disturbed for the first week post-operatively. Please rinse with a mouth rinse as advised to aid in plaque control.
7. **Physical Activity:** Avoid strenuous activity during your immediate recovery period, usually 2-3 days.
8. **Swelling:** Some slight swelling of the operated area is not unusual and may begin after the surgery. An ice pack may be used to minimize swelling. You should keep a towel-wrapped ice pack in contact with the skin as much as possible for the first 24 hours after surgery; a routine of 10 minutes, 10 minutes off is advised. If swelling occurs, it usually disappears after several days with peak swelling usually occurring 48 hours post-surgically. Any unusually large swelling or marked rise in temperature should be reported to our office immediately.
9. **Smoking:** All smoking should be stopped until after your sutures have been removed to ensure the best healing and success of your procedure. Healing results are significantly worse than in non-smokers.
10. **Alcohol:** All intake of alcohol should be stopped until after your sutures have been removed and then drink minimally for the next several days after removal to enhance healing.
11. **Do Not’s:** For the next several days, DO NOT spit, smoke, rinse hard, drink through a straw, create a “sucking” action in your mouth or use an oral irrigating device.

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