

# Rachel Brinker, DMD

## Periodontics and Implantology

### What You Should Do After Oral Surgery

**PAIN** – After the local anesthetic wears off, you will feel mild to moderate pain in the afternoon and evening. The next day, there will be much less pain. Continue to take over-the-counter pain relievers, ibuprofen (ex: Advil) 600 mg tabs as needed every 4-6 hours after your surgery. To further reduce the pain you feel, take your prescription medicine as labeled. You must not drive, operate power tools, or drink alcohol when you are taking any prescription pain reliever.

**CLENCHING OR GRINDING YOUR TEETH CAUSES PAIN STARTING SEVERAL DAYS AFTER SURGERY** – From 2-3 until 14-21 days after your operation, your teeth may feel high and tender when you close them together. This triggers a habit of clenching your teeth which can be damaging and painful. If you do this, your teeth may loosen temporarily. The bone around your teeth may ache and you may experience jaw muscle cramps and jaw joint stiffness and/or pain. This may feel like a toothache, earache or headache. Moist heat and massage will help relieve this pain.

**SWELLING** – Some swelling may occur and is normal following any oral surgery. To minimize this, sleep on two pillows for a few nights and apply crushed ice under pressure during the first day. After the second day, applying moist heat to the swollen area will help. If any swelling becomes red or more painful and hot, or you have a fever of more than 100 F, **call the office.**

**BLEEDING** - Expect blood-tinged saliva for a day or two. Do not vigorously rinse, spit or drink through a straw. If fresh bleeding starts, apply steady pressure to the area with moist gauze or a tea bag for ten minutes. If bleeding continues, **call the office.**

**ACTIVITY** – Avoid all strenuous exercise for the first three days after your surgery. This minimizes swelling, bruising, and bleeding from the incisions and you will feel better and recover faster.

**TOBACCO** – Tobacco use in any form causes poor wound healing and prolongs your recovery; it jeopardizes the success of your surgery. You should not smoke anything at all on the day of your surgery (before or after). If you cannot not quit smoking entirely for two weeks, you may use a non-prescription time-release nicotine patch. Do not use nicotine chewing gum.

**DIET** – It is essential to eat a well-balanced diet to ensure good healing. Usually an area of your mouth is untreated; try to do all of your chewing there. Avoid extremely hot or cold, spicy, or hard to chew foods; especially chips, pretzels, and french bread. Easy to eat foods include soups, eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese, cooked cereals, pasta, ground meals and many types of fish, soft fruit, and cooked vegetables. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids since narcotic pain relievers can be constipating.

**SENSITIVITY TO COLD** – For days to weeks or more, teeth near the areas treated may be more sensitive to cold. To minimize sensitivity, do not clench or grind and keep your teeth spotlessly clean. After 1 week you can apply topical fluoride gel (e.g. Gel-Kam, purchase without prescription). Do this 10 or more times a day to desensitize your tooth roots. You may also use an ADA approved desensitizing toothpaste (containing potassium nitrate) after 2 weeks.

**SUTURES (STITCHES)** - Most sutures will dissolve in 7-10 days.

**KEEP YOUR MOUTH CLEAN** – Only clean your teeth normally in the non-surgical areas. At your first post-operative appointment you will be instructed how to clean the surgical area.

**DROWSINESS** – Effects of sedative medicines may not wear off completely for up to 24 hours. It will be best for you to lie down and rest as soon as you get home. Do not drive, drink alcohol (or use other drugs) for the rest of the day.

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

Office: (415) 389-9600