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PERIODONTICS & IMPLANT SURGERY

POST-OPERATIVE ORAL SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

Tooth extraction is a minor surgical procedure. Therefore, it is natural that temporary changes will occur in the mouth afterward. You will be functioning normally in just a few days. In the meantime, you should follow a few simple rules to help promote healing, prevent complications, and make yourself more comfortable.

AT THE DENTIST'S OFFICE

Anesthetics: The length of time you experience numbness varies, depending on the type of anesthetic you have received. While your mouth is numb, you will want to be careful not to bite your cheek, lip, or tongue. The numbness should subside in a few hours.

Healing: Your dentist will place a gauze pack on the extraction site to limit bleeding and confine the blood while clotting takes place. The gauze should be left in place for 30-45 minutes after you leave the dental office. Do not chew on the pack.

AT HOME

Bleeding: There may be some bleeding or oozing after the pack is removed. If so, follow this procedure:

1. Fold a piece of gauze into a pad thick enough to bite on. Dampen it and place it directly on the site.
2. Apply moderate pressure by closing teeth firmly over pad. Maintain pressure for 30 minute. If the pad becomes soaked, replace with a clean one as necessary.
3. Do not suck on the extraction site; therefore, avoid the use of straws.
4. A slight amount of blood may leak at the extraction site until a clot forms. However, if heavy bleeding continues after 2 hours bite down on a wet teabag for up to 2 hours; if bleeding persists, call your dentist. (NOTE: a lot of saliva and a little blood, can look like a lot of bleeding.)

The blood clot: After an extraction, a blood clot forms in the tooth socket. This clot is an important part of the normal healing process. You should therefore avoid activities that might disturb the clot. Here's how to protect it:

1. Do not smoke, or rinse your mouth vigorously, or drink through a straw for 24 hours. These activities create suction in the mouth that could dislodge the clot and delay healing.
2. Do not clean teeth next to the healing site for the rest of the day. You should however, brush and floss your other teeth thoroughly. Gently rinse your mouth afterward.
3. Limit strenuous activities for 24 hours after the extraction. This will reduce bleeding and help the clot to form.

Swelling and Pain: After a tooth is removed, you may have some discomfort and notice some swelling. You can help reduce the swelling and pain by applying a cold compress to the face. An ice bag, or cold moist cloth can be used periodically. The dentist may give you specific instructions how long and how often to use the cold compress.

Medication: Your dentist may prescribe medication to control pain and prevent infection. Use it only as directed. If the prescribed medication does not seem to work for you, do not increase the dosage. If you have prolonged and/or severe pain, swelling, bleeding or fever, call your dentist immediately. He or she will give you exact instructions on how to care for the problem.

Diet: After the extraction, drink lots of cold liquids and eat soft, nutritious foods. Avoid alcoholic beverages and hot liquids. Begin eating solid foods the next date or as soon as you can chew comfortably. For the first few days, try to chew food on the opposite side of the mouth. If you are troubled by nausea or vomiting, call your dentist.

Rinsing: The day after the extraction, gently rinse with warm salt water (half a teaspoon in an 8oz glass of warm water.) Rinsing after meals is important to keep food particles out of the extraction site, but remember to rinse gently. Avoid using a mouth rinse or mouthwash during the early healing period.

Oral Hygiene: It is important to continue to floss your teeth and brush thoroughly at least twice a day using a fluoride toothpaste. The tongue should also be brushed. This will help eliminate the bad breath and unpleasant taste that is common after an extraction. Always use a soft bristled brush so that you do not injure the tissues in your mouth.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call the office.