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Surgical Post-Operative Instructions

Please follow these instructions carefully to avoid infection, “dry socket,” or severe pain or discomfort after surgery.

A gauze pad has been placed over the surgical area. Please keep your jaws together to hold the pad firmly to the surgical area for approximately **one hour** before removing. We will give you additional sterilized gauze pads to use if bleeding continues. Should this happen, fold one or two pads together in fourths and place directly over the surgical site. Again bite down with pressure. **Do not use toilet paper, kleenex, or paper towels for a pressure pack.** You may experience slight oozing from the site for a day or so; this is normal and will not require a pack.

1. Do not smoke, or use chewing tobacco for at least 24 hours. Now is a good excuse for quitting.
2. Avoid very hot beverages and carbonated beverages for at least 24 hours.
3. Eat a soft, bland diet for the first few days. Avoid spicy or hard, crunch foods.
4. Avoid drinking through a straw; suction may displace the clot and cause the surgical site to begin bleeding again.
5. Keep all foods and drinks to the side of your mouth, away from the surgical site.
6. **Do not rinse your mouth vigorously for 24 hours.** Vigorous rinsing immediately following surgery can cause loss of the clot, and can lead to a “dry socket,” which is extremely painful.
7. After 24 hours, start rinsing with warm, salt water: 1/4th teaspoon salt to 8oz of warm water. Wish gently for the first day or two. Avoid commercial mouth washes or peroxide. These can cause drying of the surgical site leading to extended periods of discomfort.
8. Continue brushing your teeth as usual, but avoid vigorous brushing over the surgical site.

Protection of the clot is of key importance. Healing begins in the clot. After 24-36 hours, the clot will become more firm. A good clot helps to protect you from major post operative pain and promotes more rapid healing.

If a prescription pain medication has been prescribed, please take as needed for pain. If you have a bad reaction, please stop taking the medication and contact Dr. Laura Herzig immediately.