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## Patient Instructions: After Exposure Surgery for Impacted Tooth

**If you had a Bracket and Chain attached:** If you had a bracket and chain attached to your impacted tooth during surgery, you should schedule an appointment with your orthodontist 1-3 weeks after surgery. If a bracket and chain was not placed on your impacted tooth, you do not need to see your orthodontist after surgery.

**Your Post-Op Appointment:** Our surgeon will see you 1-2 weeks after surgery for a post-operative evaluation.

### Immediately Following Surgery:

- A gauze pad is sometimes used to help control bleeding after surgery. If you have a gauze pad in your mouth, keep your teeth together with firm constant pressure for one hour.
- Avoid vigorous mouth rinsing and refrain from touching the wound area. These activities may initiate bleeding by dislodging the blood clot that naturally forms after surgery.
- Take pain medications as soon as you are able so they can take effect before the local anesthetic has worn off. Having something of substance in the stomach will help minimize any nausea caused by pain medications. Refer to the section on PAIN for specific details.
- Restrict your activities on the day of surgery. Normal activity may be resumed when you feel comfortable. If you are active, your heart rate may increase and you will likely experience excessive bleeding and throbbing from the wound.
- No smoking under any circumstances.

### Bleeding:

- A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. Blood will clot on dry skin in about 10 minutes. However, on a wet surface, like is found inside the mouth, it takes approximately 6-8 hours for blood to clot and for bleeding to



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subside. It is common to experience slight bleeding or oozing, which causes the saliva to appear red.

- Excessive bleeding may be controlled by GENTLY rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for 1 hour. Repeat as necessary.
- If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for 30 minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. This can be repeated several times.
- If bleeding does not subside after 6-8 hours, call the office for further instructions.

## Swelling:

- Exposure procedures generally do not produce much swelling, so it may not be necessary to use ice at all.
- The use of ice packs may minimize swelling. Sealed plastic bags filled with ice, ice packs, or a bag of frozen peas in a washcloth, can be applied to the side of the face where surgery was performed.
- Ice packs should be applied in intervals of 20 minutes on then 20 minutes off for the first 24 hours following your surgery. After 24 hours, ice has no beneficial effect.
- At 36 hours following surgery, the application of moist heat to the side of the face may reduce any swelling that has occurred.
- If a swollen area is bright red, rock hard, or hot, it suggests infection. This usually develops around the 3rd or 4th day after surgery; a time when the swelling is expected to decrease, not increase. If this should occur, please call our office immediately.

## Temperature:

- It is normal to run a low-grade temperature (99-100F) for 7-10 days following oral surgery. This is a result of your body's immune response to the normal bacteria present in your mouth.
- A temperature that is greater than 101F, persists for several days after surgery, and is accompanied by hard swelling and increased pain, is usually indicative of infection. Should this occur, call the office for instructions.



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## Pain:

- Pain or discomfort following surgery is expected to last 4-5 days. For many patients, it seems the third and fourth day may require more pain medicine than the first and second day. After the fourth day, pain should subside and decrease with each passing day.
- Many medications for pain can cause nausea or vomiting. It is wise to have something of substance in the stomach (yogurt, ice cream, pudding or apple sauce) before taking prescription pain medicines and/or over the counter pain medicines (especially aspirin or ibuprofen).
- For moderate pain, one or two tablets of acetaminophen, (Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol) may be taken every three to four hours, or ibuprofen 400 mg (Motrin or Advil) may be taken every 4 hours.
- For severe pain take the pain medication prescribed for you every 4 hours, as directed. You may take ibuprofen in addition to the prescribed pain medicine. **DO NOT** take any acetaminophen (Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol) in addition to the prescribed pain medication. The prescribed pain medication will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes.
  - Do not drive an automobile or work around or operate heavy machinery if you are taking prescription pain medicine.
  - Do not consume alcohol while taking prescription pain medication.
- If prescription pain medications are required beyond 4 days, further treatment may be indicated. Please call the office and discuss your situation with us.

## Diet:

- Drink plenty of fluids. Try to drink 5-6 eight-ounce glasses the first day.
- You may use a straw if drinking from a glass or cup.
- Avoid hot liquids or food while you are numb so you don't burn yourself.
- Soft food and liquids can be eaten on the day of surgery. The act of chewing doesn't damage anything, but you should avoid chewing sharp or hard objects at the surgical site for several days.
- Return to a normal diet as soon as possible, unless otherwise directed. For the first few days, you will find that eating multiple small meals is easier than eating three regular meals.



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- If you continue to eat, you will feel better, have more strength, experience less discomfort and heal faster.

## Oral Hygiene:

- Good oral hygiene is essential to proper healing of any oral surgery site.
- Do not brush your teeth, rinse or spit immediately after surgery.
- Beginning on the day after surgery, you should brush your teeth with toothpaste and rinse 2-3 times per day, especially after eating. Salt water makes an ideal rinse (mix 1 cup of warm water with 1 teaspoon of salt). Plain water may also be used for rinsing.

## Smoking:

- No smoking for 48 hours after surgery. Smoking retards healing dramatically. Nicotine constricts blood vessels, which slows the formation and expansion of the healing blood clot in the socket.

## Activity:

- Keep physical activity to a minimum for 6-12 hours following surgery.
- If you are considering exercise, throbbing or bleeding may occur. If this happens, discontinue exercising.
- Keep in mind that you are probably not receiving your normal nourishment. This may weaken you and limit your ability to exercise. Please call our office with any questions or concerns.