***Smiles Inc Post-Operative Instructions for Dental Extractions.***

**Immediately following surgery:**

**Bite firmly on the gauze pads** covering each extraction site to help stop the bleeding. We may change the gauze pads before you leave the office. You can change the gauze pads once more at home, leaving it in for 30 additional minutes. Remember to remove gauze before eating or drinking. You may have difficulty feeling your lips, cheeks or tongue due to numbness from the Local Anesthesia. This is a temporary feeling and will wear off within 2 to 6 hours. **Please take care not to bite your lips, cheeks or tongue**. Apply ice packs to your face to reduce swelling for the first 24 hours after surgery. Ice should not be used after the first 24 hours. **Take pain medications as prescribed as soon as possible**. Do not rinse or spit aggressively the day of the surgery, as this may prolong the bleeding or dislodged the healing blood clot in the extraction site..

**Bleeding: Some bleeding is to be expected following surgery**. If you continue to bleed excessively after 12 hours of the surgery, apply pressure by folding and placing a gauze pad directly over the extraction site and biting firmly on it for at least one hour. Excessive bleeding is defined as pooling or dripping blood out of the extraction sites within 15-20 seconds of removing the gauze. Don't use the amount of blood on the gauze as a guide, because minimal bleeding may persist for up to 24 hours. If excessive bleeding still continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, do not become excited, sit upright, and avoid exercise. If bleeding does not subside, call our office for further instructions. **Minimal bleeding may persist for up to 24 hours to two days**. It is not unusual for saliva to be slightly blood-tinged for several days following surgery.

**Medication:** You may receive a prescription for an antibiotic, a pain reliever, and/or medication to reduce swelling. These prescriptions can be filled at the pharmacy of your choice. **Take all medications as instructed by your doctor**. The first does of your prescribed pain medication may be taken with a liquid only, but it is important to get some soft food (milkshake, pudding, yogurt, scrambled eggs, pasta) in your stomach as soon as possible. Take all subsequent doses along with food to minimize nausea where it is indicated.

**Pain Management: Some amount of discomfort is to be expected following any surgery**. If your surgeon feels you will benefit from a prescription pain medicine, you will receive a prescription following your surgery. Please follow the instructions carefully.

**Diet:** After general anesthetic or sedation, clear liquids should be initially taken. **Do not use straws**. Drink from a glass. The sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. **You should have a soft food diet on the day of surgery and the following day**. Soft foods include ice cream, pudding, jello, yogurt, soup (lukewarm), pancakes, mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs and pasta. Drink lots of fluids to rehydrate. Avoid hard, crunchy foods such as chips that may disturb the extraction site for at least three days. After the third day, you may eat anything you wish, unless your doctor gives you other instructions. **No alcoholic beverages should be consumed for at least twenty-four hours** following general anesthesia or as long as you are taking medications.

**Smoking: Do not smoke for at least 3 days following surgery. Your BEST however is to quit ☺**

**Brushing/Rinsing: Avoid all brushing, rinsing or spitting the day of the surgery.** The day after your surgery, you may brush your teeth, but avoid brushing near the surgical site(s) for 3 days. Rinse with ½ cup warm water and a pinch of salt beginning 1 days after surgery about 3-4 times daily for a week.

**Swelling: Swelling around the mouth, eyes and cheeks is normal following any surgery**, and it usually takes 2-3 days to fully develop. Applying ice to your face and keeping your head elevated for the first 24 hours will help reduce swelling. Ice serves no useful purpose after 24 hours and may contribute to stiffness in the jaw. Beginning seventy-two hours after surgery (the third day), a heating pad or moist heat may be used for relief of swelling, bruising and stiffness of the jaw. Heat should be continued for thirty minute intervals, three or four times daily, until the symptoms subside.

**Sutures/"stitches": Your sutures dissolve on their own and may come out any time after surgery**. You may notice that they are loose after the swelling of your gum tissue decreases. This is completely normal. If your doctor placed “Non-resorbable” sutures, then you will get an appointment for their removal.

**Irrigating:** If you have been provided with an irrigator (small plastic syringe), you should begin using it on the **third day after surgery on the lower extraction sites after each meal and at bedtime.** Fill the irrigator with lukewarm water. You may add a small amount of salt. Make sure to get the tip of the irrigator into the extraction site and flush out the extraction site completely. This may be uncomfortable at first, but keeping the site clean reduces the chance of infection or dry socket.

**Resuming activities:** If you have undergone general anesthesia or sedation, you should go home immediately and rest for the remainder of the day. **Do not drive or engage in strenuous activities for at least 24 hours for extractions done under any form of anesthesia**. You may return to work or school when you feel you are recovered. We can supply a doctor's note if necessary.

**Dry socket:** After tooth extraction, it's important for a blood clot to form to stop the bleeding and begin the healing process. A dry socket occurs when the blood clot is dislodged or has prematurely dissolved from the surgery site exposing the bone and fine nerve endings. This condition is more common in lower back teeth, particularly wisdom teeth, although it can occur in any extraction site. Dry socket occurs 3-7 days after an extraction.

**Avoiding dry socket: Do not smoke**. Clean the extraction site as instructed and follow all at-home instructions. Avoid sucking action from smoking, spitting or using straws for the first 24 hours. **Do not rinse mouth excessively**; it interferes with blood clotting.

**Nausea and Vomiting:** In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, **do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour including the prescribed medicine**. You should then sip on coke, tea or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a fifteen-minute period. When the nausea subsides you can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine. In rare occasions, some of the prescribed medications can cause nausea as a side effect, please read the label for suggestions on how to prevent or reduce this effect.

**Other Complications:**

* If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. As stated before surgery, this is **usually temporary in nature**. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb, you could bite it and not feel the sensation. So be careful. Call our office if you have any questions.
* Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. **If the temperature persists, notify the office. Tylenol or ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.**
* You should be careful going from the lying down position to standing. You were not able to eat or drink prior to surgery. It was also difficult to take fluids. **Taking pain medications can make you dizzy**. You could get light headed when you stand up suddenly. Before standing up, you should sit for one minute then get up.
* Occasionally, **patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue**. They are not retained roots or pieces of the tooth, they are the bony walls which supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed by your doctor who performed the initial procedure.
* If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment such as vaseline.
* **Sore throats and pain when swallowing are not uncommon**. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in 2-3 days.
* Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative event which will resolve in time.

**Finally:** Sutures are placed the area of surgery to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help healing. Sometimes they become dislodged, this is no cause for alarm. Just remove the suture form your mouth and discard it. The non-resorbable sutures will be removed approximately one week after surgery. The removal of sutures requires no anesthesia or needles. It takes only a minute or so, and there is minimal discomfort associated with this procedure.

The pain and swelling should subside more and more each day following surgery. **If your post-operative pain or swelling worsens or unusual symptoms occur call our office for instructions.**

There will be a cavity (hole) where the tooth was removed. The cavity will gradually over the next month fill in with the new tissue. In the meantime, **the area should be kept clean especially after meals with salt water rinses**.

Your case is individual, no two mouths are alike. Do not accept well intended advice from friends. Discuss your problem with the persons best able to effectively help you**: THE DOCTOR THAT PERFORMED THE SURGICAL PROCEDURE.**

Brushing your teeth is okay - just be gentle at the surgical sites. If you are involved in regular exercise, be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced. Exercise may weaken you. If you get light headed, stop exercising.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER CONCERNS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US AT 296-0990.**

**HAPPY HEALING ☺**