

Paul S. Lewis, D.D.S., M.S.

Specialist in Periodontics

Office phone: (715)842-3506

(800)318-2315

Home phone: (715)842-0799

Pager: (715)576-8200

HOME CARE AFTER YOUR PERIODONTAL SURGERY

Discomfort

As with any surgical procedure, a certain amount of discomfort is normal after periodontal surgery. The pain medication which has been prescribed for you should help to make you comfortable. After the first 24 to 48 hours, an over-the-counter pain medication (such as Tylenol, aspirin or ibuprofen) may be sufficient to make you comfortable.

IMPORTANT: *Prescription pain medications, such as Vicodin (hydrocodone), may cause drowsiness. Do not drive a vehicle or operate dangerous equipment after taking a prescription pain medication.*

IMPORTANT: *Prescription pain medications and alcohol don't mix. Do not consume alcoholic beverages when you are taking a prescription pain medication.*

If the prescription pain medication does not relieve most of your discomfort or you have problems taking the medication, please call me immediately at any time of the day or night.

Bleeding

Slight oozing from the surgery area for the first 24 hours after surgery is normal. Pinkish saliva is also normal during the first 24 to 48 hours after surgery. Bleeding that is more than just slight oozing can usually be controlled with direct pressure. Take a folded, gauze square and press it firmly over the bleeding area for five minutes without interruption.

If direct pressure does not control the bleeding or if you are concerned, please call me immediately at any time of the day or night.

Swelling

Some swelling is normal after periodontal surgery. It may persist for two or three days.

It is very important to ice the surgery area for the rest of the day after your surgery. Whenever you are awake, hold an ice pack on the cheek or lip over the surgery area for intermittent periods (15 minutes on and 15 minutes off) for the rest of the day after your surgery until you go to bed.

On the second or third day after your surgery, use moist heat instead of an ice pack. Take a warm, moist washcloth that has been heated in a microwave and hold it on the cheek or lip over the surgery area until it cools off. *Be careful not to overheat the washcloth.* A hot water bottle or heating pad may also be used.

If severe swelling develops or if swelling persists beyond the third day after your surgery, please call me immediately at any time of the day or night.

Antibiotics

An antibiotic (such as doxycycline) may have been prescribed for you to take during the first 7 to 14 days after your surgery. Be sure to take the antibiotic as instructed and to keep taking it until you have finished all the pills. If you forget to take a pill, start again when you are supposed to take the next pill. If you have a sensitive stomach, it may help to eat and drink something when you take the antibiotic.

If you have a problem taking the antibiotic or have a reaction (such as hives or a rash), please call me immediately at any time of the day or night.

Physical activity

You must minimize your physical activity as much as possible for the rest of the day after your surgery. You should sit in a comfortable chair or lie down on a bed or couch and read, watch TV or

sleep for the rest of the day. If you lie down, slightly elevate your head on an extra pillow. You should not go back to work until the next day, even if you have a sedentary job. If you do not minimize your physical activity for the rest of the day after your surgery, you may have healing problems later, such as more swelling and discomfort.

You may resume your normal activities the next day, but do not engage in vigorous exercise or strenuous physical activity for at least the first three days after your surgery.

Diet

It is important to drink plenty of liquids during the first 24 hours after your surgery. Eat a soft, nutritious diet (such as soup, stew, yogurt, cooked cereal and pureed food) for the first several days after your surgery. Avoid foods that are hard, crunchy or difficult to chew. You may eat whatever you can tolerate, but try to avoid chewing with the teeth in the surgery area.

Smoking

Smoking retards healing after periodontal surgery. Ideally, you should not smoke at all during the first week after your surgery. If you cannot stop smoking completely, at least do not smoke during the first 24 hours after your surgery, and then minimize your smoking as much as possible during the rest of the first week.

Oral Hygiene

A special antibacterial mouthrinse has been prescribed for you to use during the first week after your surgery. Begin rinsing your mouth with this solution on the evening after your surgery. Take the cap off the bottle, fill it about half full with mouthrinse, gently swish the solution in your mouth (especially the surgery area) for 30 to 60 seconds and then spit it out.

On the day after your surgery, you should begin to gently brush the teeth in the surgery area with a mouthrinse-soaked soft-bristle toothbrush two times a day (in the morning after breakfast and at bedtime). Dip your toothbrush in the mouthrinse and gently brush the teeth in the surgery area using short, gentle, back-and-forth strokes. Brush the top, cheek side and tongue side of each tooth in the surgery area. After you finish gently brushing the teeth in the surgery area, take the rest of the mouthrinse and gently swish the solution in your mouth (especially the surgery area) for 30 to 60 seconds and then spit it out.

Don't try to clean between the teeth in the surgery area with dental floss or a Proxabrush during the first week. Brush, floss and Proxabrush the teeth in the rest of your mouth as you normally do.

Warm salt water rinses also help to promote healing. Dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a 12 ounce glass of warm water and rinse three to four times a day as described above for the prescription mouthrinse. You can begin warm salt water rinses on the evening after your surgery and continue throughout the first week.

Problems or questions

If you have a problem or question of any kind, please call me immediately at any time of the day or night at one of the numbers shown above.

It is my goal to provide you with the best periodontal care possible. If there is anything that I or a member of my staff can do to improve any aspect of your periodontal treatment, please let me know.

Paul S. Lewis, D.D.S., M.S.