PATIENT POST-OPERATIVE CARE

PERIODONTAL POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Although not all of the following pertain to every type of surgery, you may find these instructions helpful.

1. CARE OF SURGICAL DRESSING:
The surgical dressing or “pack” was placed in your mouth for several reasons, the most important being to assist in the healing and to allow for more comfortable eating. This dressing takes several hours to harden, so care must be taken not to disturb it during this time. You should avoid smoking, talking, eating or drinking of warm fluids for at least two hours. Do not “play” with the dressing with the tongue.

2. LOSS OF SURGICAL DRESSING:
Occasionally, small pieces of the dressing break off in the days following surgery. If the uncovered area is small and feels satisfactory, it is perfectly safe to wait until your next appointment. However, if a large piece should break off or if the dressing feels loose, call Dr. Liu as soon as possible to have the dressing replaced. If it is necessary to eat before the dressing is replaced, be cautious of anything too hot, spicy or hard to chew.

3. BRUSHING:
On the day of surgery, teeth should NOT be brushed. Twenty-four hours after surgery, brushing and flossing of teeth and rinsing of the mouth should be resumed, but do NOT brush on or near the dressing.

4. PAIN:
A certain amount of discomfort or pain can be expected following all types of surgery. Usually, this is slight and can be controlled by taking two aspirin, Tylenol or Advil tablets. Avoid clenching or grinding of teeth after surgery since pressure on the teeth will cause discomfort. If more acute pain is experienced, take the pain medication Dr. Liu prescribed according to the directions.

5. USE OF ICE PACK:
When you arrive home after surgery, apply an ice pack to the face for 20 minutes, remove for 20 minutes and reapply. Continue this cycle for 3-4 hours.

6. SWELLING:
A slight amount of swelling and discomfort is expected following some procedures and usually goes away within 2-3 days. If swelling begins, it can usually be controlled by the use of an ice pack or cold compress applied to the outside of the face in the area of surgery on and off alternately every 20 minutes for 3-4 hours. If swelling persists for more than three days, contact Dr. Liu.

7. BLEEDING:
DO NOT rinse mouth for the first few hours. Slow oozing (bleeding) may occur for several hours. If bleeding is excessive:

a. Apply gauze or a tea bag moistened in warm water on each site of bleeding and hold with continuous pressure for 30 minutes and avoid spitting. Repeat if necessary.

b. If bleeding still continues, call Dr. Liu.

8. DIET:
Eating should be avoided for at least two hours following surgery. For the first day following surgery, it is best to restrict your diet to fluids or very soft foods that require little or no chewing (for example, spaghetti, scrambled eggs or a milkshake). When you must chew, chew on the side of your mouth that was not operated on. Chewing on the dressing will probably loosen or break it off.

9. POST-OP APPOINTMENTS:
All scheduled post-operative appointments (usually once per week after surgery) are for your benefit and must be kept in order to monitor proper healing.