

## **CARE OF THE MOUTH AFTER PERIODONTAL SURGERY**

1. In order to stop the bleeding and facilitate healing, do not smoke, swish, spit, or drink through a straw for at least 3-5 days. Also, avoid chewing on the side of the surgery until after the stitches have been removed.
2. To decrease swelling, apply an ice pack (ice in a "zip-lock" bag wrapped in a towel will do nicely) to the face over the surgical site for 10-15 minute intervals (15 minutes on, 15 minutes off to prevent frostbite), during the first 4-6 hours following surgery.
3. Avoid strenuous activity and get plenty of rest during the first two days after surgery. Consider sleeping on two pillows to elevate your head and cover the pillowcase with an old towel.
4. To decrease the risk of infection, brush and floss the teeth at the site thoroughly each morning and night, being careful to not disturb the stitches or dressing, if present. If prescribed, use the medicated mouthrinse instead of home care for the surgical site. Keep tongue and fingers away from the site of surgery.
5. For pain, take any aspirin-free pain relief medication (*e.g.* Advil® or Tylenol®) or the medication prescribed, as directed.
6. On the day after surgery, a light rinse with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon salt to 8 oz. water) will help freshen the mouth after each meal.
7. Maintain a liquid diet after surgery. Progress to soft food the next day, and slowly progress toward normal diet after that. Remember to increase your fluid intake while the healing process is occurring.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER PERIODONTAL SURGERY:**

1. Pain, bruising, mild swelling, and some bleeding is normal and to be expected. Mild oozing of blood from the surgical site may occur for several days. In most cases, excessive fluid in the mouth after surgery is usually a combination of mostly unswallowed saliva and a bit of blood, and is of little concern. Questionable bleeding should, however, be brought to the attention of the doctor as soon as possible.
2. Some difficulty chewing is to be expected as it is not uncommon for patients to clench their teeth for prolonged periods after surgery in the mouth. Allow the muscles to stretch gradually over several days. After the first day, use moist heat to soothe the area(s) of soreness.
3. The proper care following oral surgery will hasten recovery and help to prevent complications. Any significant swelling, pain, or other unexplained symptoms that occur should be brought to the attention of the doctor. Please do not hesitate to call.

**Thank you for the opportunity to provide for your care.**