

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR ORAL AND FACIAL SURGERY

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POST-OPERATIVE INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS- SOFT TISSUE SURGERY/ BIOPSIES

Surgery of any kind places a stress on your body. Get adequate rest and avoid strenuous activity for a few days following your procedure. If you received intravenous sedation or general anesthesia, it is important for someone to stay with you until you have recovered from the effects of these medications.

Post-operative problems may be minimized by the following instructions. Please read them carefully. It is strongly urged that they be followed.

1. Bleeding:

Bleeding should be minimal after surgery. However, a small amount of oozing would not be unusual. Avoid vigorous rinsing, spitting, smoking and drinking through a straw for the first day after surgery, as all of these will disturb the wound and reinitiate bleeding. Assume a semi-upright position, use two pillows in bed. If bleeding occurs, apply constant pressure with a gauze pad over the surgical site. If significant bleeding still continues, call the office for advice.

2. Swelling:

Swelling and bruising are normal reactions to surgery, and vary from patient to patient and from one surgery to another. You may use ice chips in your mouth, or an ice pack on your face next to the surgical site. Alternate 20 minutes with ice with 20 minutes without ice. After the first 24 hours, the ice will not have much effect on swelling, but may make the surgical site feel better. Swelling usually reaches its maximum about 48 - 72 hours after surgery.

3. Infection:

Most surgical procedures in healthy patients have a low risk of developing an infection. Some patients may be placed on antibiotic medication. It is important to follow the directions on the label and take the medication until it is completely gone. An antibiotic oral rinse may also be prescribed. If you develop hives or a rash, discontinue all medication and contact the office immediately.

There may be a slight elevation in temperature for 24 to 48 hours after surgery. This is a normal body response to the surgery. If the temperature persists or is greatly elevated, please notify the office.

4. Pain:

After any surgical procedure, swelling and some discomfort are anticipated. This varies considerably from patient to patient, even after identical procedures. This normally reaches its peak 48 - 72 hours after surgery, then starts to decrease. If you have only minor pain, try an over-the-counter drug, such as Tylenol, Advil, or Aleve. Avoid aspirin and aspirin-containing products, as these interfere with blood clotting. If you have been given a prescription for a stronger pain medication, have it filled at a pharmacy convenient for you and take the medication as directed. The pain medication may make you drowsy, so you should not drive a car or perform any important tasks while taking the medication. The pain medication should never be taken on an empty stomach. If you develop hives or a rash, discontinue all medication and contact the office immediately.

5. Nausea:

Post-operative nausea is usually due to swallowing a small amount of blood during and/or after surgery. A small amount of carbonated drink, such as 7-Up or ginger ale every hour for 5 or 6 hours will usually relieve this feeling. Sometimes pain medications can cause nausea. If nausea continues, contact this office.

6. Diet:

A bland liquid diet is recommended for the day of surgery. Following this, soft food high in vitamins and protein is advised. Avoid crunchy, spicy, or acidic foods, which may irritate the surgical site. The doctor will tell you when it is alright to resume a normal diet. No alcohol is to be consumed for the first four days after the procedure.

7. Oral Hygiene:

You should rinse your mouth gently with warm salt water solution 5 or 6 times a day. You may begin this as soon as you get home if there is no bleeding. Continue this for the first week after surgery. You may brush your teeth after surgery, but avoid the treated area for a few days. The cleaner you keep your mouth, the faster and easier the surgical site will heal.

8. Smoking is a great irritation to surgical sites in the mouth and will significantly increase discomfort. Smoking delays healing and will increase the risk of infection of the surgical site. Smoking should be avoided or greatly reduced during the healing period.

9. Your lips may be dry and cracked due to stretching the corners of your mouth during surgery. Your lips should be kept moist with vaseline or other lip ointments.

Should you have any post-operative problems or questions, do not hesitate to call the office so we may help you.