



## **POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

### *GENERAL INFORMATION:*

Protect the blood clot in your tooth socket or surgical site. This is the most important factor for your comfort and healing. A blood clot forms in the socket after an extraction. If the blood clot is prematurely lost, the bone and nerve become exposed, causing pain. This is called a dry socket.

It is normal to have postoperative bleeding for the first 24 hours. You may notice blood tinged saliva. If bleeding becomes prolonged and persistent, place direct pressure over the surgical sites. To do this, bite on a warm moist tea bag for at least 20 minutes. This should help it clot. If bleeding persists, please call the office.

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### DO NOT:

Spit, rinse forcefully, or use a straw for 48 hours. This may loosen the blood clot, causing a dry socket.

Smoke for 24 hours after surgery. Smoking delays healing of the gums and can cause a dry socket.

Eat hard crunchy foods such as popcorn or nuts for the first 2 weeks. Little pieces can become caught in the socket, causing discomfort and possible infection.

Drive, drink alcohol, work or operate machinery if you are taking prescription pain medication.

Stick your fingers or anything else in the area of surgery.

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### DO:

Have soft, easy to chew food to prevent biting your cheek or tongue while the area is numb. It is important to have food and fluids immediately following surgery to prevent dehydration.

Rinse with warm salt water 3 times a day for a week starting 48 hours after surgery.  
(Add 1 teaspoon of salt per 8 ounce glass of warm water).

Keep your mouth clean. A clean mouth heals faster! When you brush, avoid the extraction sites for at least 4 days. Be careful not to spit or rinse forcefully. You may begin brushing in 24 hours.

Apply ice packs to the area for the first 3 days for swelling following surgery. After 3 days, moist heat applied to the surgery site may help reduce any residual swelling. Keeping the head elevated with extra pillows for the first few days will also help with swelling.