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Post-Surgical Care Instructions

REST:

Limit physical activity for **at least** a day or two after surgery. When lying down, **keep your head elevated with an extra pillow or by placing a thick book under the mattress** for the first 24 hours. **Avoid strenuous exercise** for **at least 2-3 days** after surgery.

PAIN RELIEF:

You will have been advised to take **either over-the-counter (OTC) or prescribed pain medications**. For most patients, 400mg of Advil (Ibuprofen) effectively controls pain. If you **are allergic to or cannot tolerate** aspirin-like medications, **do not take Advil**. Alternatives include:

- **325mg or 500mg Tylenol (OTC) up to 1000 mg**
- **Tylenol with codeine (by prescription)**

If Advil or Tylenol alone do not control your pain, **you may take them together** for better relief. However, **do not exceed 2400mg of Advil (Ibuprofen) or 4000 mg (Tylenol) in 24 hours**.

Pain levels can vary. It is common for pain to **peak around day 3**—this is **normal**.

If sinus involvement: Use a **decongestant** as directed by your surgeon. **Avoid activities that create sinus pressure**, such as blowing your nose forcefully or drinking through a straw, for **at least 7 days**.

ANTIBIOTICS:

Some surgeries require antibiotics. If prescribed, **take the full course as directed**. If you develop itching, a rash, or swelling, **stop taking the medication immediately** and call our office at **(587) 486-9868**.

If you have trouble breathing, go to the nearest **hospital emergency department** immediately.

ORAL HYGIENE:

Do **not** brush or floss the **surgical site** for at least **one week**, unless otherwise instructed. **This can cause stitches to loosen or disrupt healing**.

Instead, **use an antibacterial rinse** provided at surgery:

- **Swish for 30 seconds and spit it out twice daily** (follow bottle instructions).
- **Do not swallow the rinse.**
- You may also **gently swab the site** with a Q-tip dipped in the rinse.
- Rinse with **warm salt water** (1 tsp. salt in 1 cup of warm water) **several times a day** to promote healing.

STITCHES:

We use **both dissolving and non-dissolving stitches**. If you have **non-dissolving stitches**, you will need an appointment **in 2 weeks** for removal.



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Dissolving stitches **may start to fall out within 2 days**—this is **normal**. If a stitch comes loose and is bothersome, **you may carefully trim it** with small scissors.

We may also use **medical glue**, which will **gradually wear off** as healing progresses.

SWELLING:

Swelling is **common and expected**. Reduce swelling by applying an **ice pack** over the surgical area **on and off every 20 minutes** during the first **24 hours** after surgery.

Swelling is often **worse in the morning** because of lying down overnight. **It will gradually improve as you move around.**

BLEEDING:

Mild **blood staining in saliva** is **normal** after surgery. **Profuse bleeding is very rare.**

If bleeding occurs:

1. **Apply firm pressure with a moistened tea bag for 20 minutes.**
2. **If bleeding continues after 40 minutes, call our office.**
3. **If unable to reach us, go to the nearest hospital emergency department.**

For sinus surgery patients:

- A mild **nosebleed** may occur within the first **two days** after surgery.
- **Pinch your nostrils and tilt your head back to stop the bleeding.**

RINSING:

- **Do not rinse your mouth vigorously** for the first **24 hours**, as this may cause bleeding.
- **Do not use a straw** for the first **48 hours**, as this can disturb clot formation.

SMOKING & ALCOHOL:

- **Smoking slows healing and increases the risk of complications.** Avoid smoking **as much as possible.**
- **Alcohol can interfere** with some pain medications and antibiotics. **It can also increase bleeding risk.**
Avoid alcohol for at least **the first few days** after surgery.

NUTRITION:

Eat a **soft diet** and **avoid hard, crunchy foods, small seeds, and popcorn**, as these can get trapped in the surgical area.

If eating is difficult, **consider liquid food supplements** to maintain nutrition. **Diabetic patients** should try to **stick to their normal diet** as closely as possible.

PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS?

If you have any concerns, please call our office at **(587) 486-9868**.

For **emergency assistance outside office hours**, call **Dr. Merrill at (587) 257-0102**

