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**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

**SWELLING:** Swelling is the body's normal response to surgery and the beginning of the healing process. Swelling will vary among individuals and according to different procedures. Swelling will increase over the first 48-72, and subside over the next 5 to 7 days. Apply cold packs (15 minutes on, 15 minutes off) for the first 36 hours while awake. Keep head elevated for the first 72 hours using pillows under the back and head while sleeping.

**BLEEDING:** Minor bleeding or blood-tinged saliva may occur for the first 24 to 48 hours. Bite on gauze for 1-2 hours following surgery. If heavy bleeding still occurs, replace with new gauze and bite for 1 hour and repeat this cycle until bleeding ceases. Do not drink through a straw or suck on candy for 1 week. Do not smoke for 7-10 days following surgery. (A Nicotine patch is fine to use but avoid Nicotine gum).

**PAIN:** Medication has been prescribed according to your anticipated level of discomfort. Take pain medication before numbness from the local anesthetic is gone. If prescribed, Ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) and narcotic pain medicine (i.e. Percocet, Vicodin, or Darvocet) may be taken together. Repeat every 4-6 hours as needed. Take medication after soft foods and beverage (sport drink) to avoid nausea. Do not drive, operate hazardous machinery or drink alcohol while taking pain medication.

**RINSING:** You may drink but not rinse mouth for the first 24 hours following surgery. After 24 hours, gently rinse mouth with warm salt water ( ½ teaspoon salt in large glass lukewarm water) 3 to 4 times daily. Continue rinsing until you return (1-2 weeks). Gently brush your teeth the day after surgery, being careful in the areas where surgery was performed.

**DIET:** A soft or liquid diet is best for the first 48 hours. Cool liquids such as fruit smoothies (without small seeds), lukewarm soups, and sport drinks are best. Warm soft foods such as toast, mashed potatoes, well-cooked pasta are acceptable. Avoid hot or carbonated beverages for 72 hours.

**SUTURES:** If sutures were placed, they will dissolve by themselves unless you are specifically told that non-dissolvable sutures were used. Sutures may loosen or come out prior to your next appointment.

Be assured that our interest in your well being does not end with surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at the office number listed above. Help will always be available.