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## Post-Op Instructions After Surgical Orthodontics (Exposure and Bracket)

### **PROTECTION OF THE BLOOD CLOT / SURGICAL SITE:**

Slight bleeding after a tooth extraction is normal and may last for several hours. Bite on folded gauze directly over the bleeding area and replace if bleeding is excessive. If there is no active bleeding then leave the gauze out. Lay in a semi-reclined position. Avoid bending over and rinsing for a minimum of 24 hours. Avoid spitting and using straws for 1 week. No strenuous activity or smoking for 48 hours. The formation of a blood clot is important for healing. Remove gauze if you are planning to eat, drink, or sleep. If bleeding is excessive, place a moistened black tea bag at the surgical site for 30 minutes for up to an hour. Repeat this if necessary. If the bleeding cannot be controlled, contact your surgeon.

### **RINSING / HYGIENE:**

Rinsing may dislodge the blood clot and interrupt the normal process of healing if started too early. Carefully follow these steps in order to prevent any delays in healing.

- **Day of surgery:** Do not rinse and do not spit. Brush and floss your teeth as normal, avoiding the surgical site.
- **Days following surgery:** Brush and floss your teeth as normal, 2 times per day, making sure to be gentle around the extraction sites (do not brush directly on surgical site). Begin gently rinsing (vigorous rinsing may dislodge the blood clot and interrupt the normal process of healing). Warm salt-water rinses should be completed after every meal. If prescribed a mouth rinse: use morning and evening (after brushing teeth). If prescribed a gel: apply to the surgical site as prescribed. If no prescription rinse is given, please rinse with listerine total care or crest pro-health twice daily (after brushing teeth).” Start all mouth rinsing 24 hours after the procedure. Avoid touching the area with your fingers as this can increase infection risks. If a syringe is provided, fill with salt water and gently irrigate the site, after day 5 as directed.

**A clean mouth will heal faster.**

**SWELLING / FEVER:**

Swelling and bruising are normal following extractions. A cool pack placed on the face will be beneficial to help control any swelling and bleeding. Up to 36 hours following surgery, the application of a warm compress to the sides of the face is beneficial in reducing the size of the swelling. Swelling peaks on the second or third day postoperative; however, it is normal to have swelling and/or pain up to and beyond day five. If extreme swelling or a temperature above 38.3°C occurs, contact our office.

**PAIN:**

Some discomfort is normal following a tooth extraction(s) and is not always directly related to the surgical site. If pain medication is prescribed, take only as directed. Often it is beneficial to take the medication with, or after eating to help prevent nausea. *Do not drive while using narcotic pain medications.*

**POST-OP ANTIBIOTICS:**

If prescribed antibiotics, take your antibiotic doses with food. If you have a sensitive stomach, consider taking a probiotic which contains *S. boulardii*, which can be purchased at most drug stores and health food stores.

**SMOKING / VAPING / ALCOHOL:**

Do not smoke, vape, or drink alcohol for 48 hours following oral surgery. This may cause the disruption of healthy blood clot formation and increase in complications including dry socket, prolonged healing, wound breakdown and post-operative infections.

**DIET:**

No hot liquids, acidic foods or drinks for the first 24 hours. Eat something when you feel ready to. Cool liquids are best to start but avoid sucking through straws. Once the numbness from the local anesthetic starts to wear off, progress to a soft diet but avoid chewing in the area of the surgery, until jaw mobility has returned to normal. High calorie, high protein intake is very important to your healing. Avoid foods with small seeds (eg. chia seeds, strawberries, etc.).

**DRY SOCKET:**

You may feel hard, sharp areas on/around the surgical site. This is the hard bony wall, which originally supported the tooth. "Dry Socket" is a term usually describing an area where the blood clot has dislodged leaving an exposed bony area which is painful, and will occur 3-5 days post op. A "Dry Socket" will usually heal on its own. Pain control is

the main concern when this happens. Try using an anti-inflammatory medicine like ibuprofen in addition to the narcotic pain medicine that was prescribed, unless advised otherwise.

**NAUSEA:**

Nausea is a normal side effect of narcotic pain medications. If you have severe nausea or vomiting you may need to stop the pain medications or take an additional anti-nausea medication.

**SUTURES:**

Sutures are placed in the area of surgery to minimize postoperative bleeding and to help with healing. Sometimes they become dislodged; this is no cause for alarm. The sutures will dissolve on their own approximately 3-5 days after surgery, unless advised otherwise.

**EXERCISE:**

No strenuous activity until three days following the surgery. After three days you may resume normal activity if you feel comfortable to do so. If you are involved in regular exercise, be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced. Exercise may weaken you. If you get light headed, stop exercising.

**SURGICAL PACKING:**

Do not disturb the wound. If surgical packing was placed, leave it alone. The pack helps to keep the tooth exposed. If it gets dislodged or falls out do not be alarmed just call to follow-up with the office.

**FOLLOW-UP:**

Follow up with your orthodontist as directed by your surgeon.

**MOLAR EXPOSURE:**

If molars were exposed and bracketed it may take time for the tooth to obtain a healthy position. Be diligent and make sure to carefully clean the area until the site is healthy (this may take a year or two in some cases).