

Post-Operative Instructions

1. Apply an ice pack to the area of surgery (the outside of the face): on for 20 minutes and off for 10 minutes. Repeat this for at least 2 hours. Doing this will prevent swelling. Ice can be used for many days after surgery if there is any swelling.
2. Pain: we recommend that you take from 1 to 3 ibuprofen (Advil) or 1 to 3 acetaminophen (Tylenol) tablets when you get home. Then take 1 or 2 of these every 3 to 4 hours for pain. If you are having more discomfort, then you can take the strong prescription medication. Avoid aspirin for 36 hours.
3. Do Not Spit. Spitting only prolongs the bleeding. A little bleeding is normal and will usually stop within the hour. If more bleeding does occur, here is what to do:
 - a. With moistened gauze (tissue paper is okay, too) apply finger pressure very firmly to the area and hold this for 20 to 30 minutes or more. It may need to be repeated.
 - b. Pressure always stops bleeding!
4. If a periodontal dressing has been placed over the surgical site, please allow 1 hour before eating or drinking for it to set. If this "pack" or dressing falls off, do not be concerned unless you are uncomfortable. It is there to help protect the area for a few days and is not needed.
5. Avoid rinsing the day of surgery! Tomorrow you can rinse with mild salt water, diluted mouthwash, or prescription medication if it was given to you.
6. Brush your teeth as soon as you can! You can brush in the surgery area with a soft brush. Keeping the teeth clean speeds healing! Place the brush under warm water to soften the bristles.
7. There are no dietary restrictions except to eat what is comfortable and avoid what it not. Softer foods such as pasta, eggs, yogurt, etc., are usually easily tolerated.
8. Swelling of the face can occur after surgery: it is the first sign of normal healing. Using the ice immediately will keep it minimal. Once you have some facial swelling, it will usually persist for a number of days.
9. Call the office if you develop a fever, severe swelling, or heavy bleeding.
10. Drink fluids. This is very important especially if eating is difficult. Vaseline can be used on your lips.
11. The sutures or stitches usually will dissolve in 5 to 10 days. Long, loose ends can be trimmed if they bother you.
12. Caution: whenever taking prescription pain medication it is advisable to sit upright for 1 full minute before standing from a prone position. A fast position change can cause dizziness and fainting. Also, taking pain medication on an empty stomach can cause nausea. Try to have a little food, drink, or even a stomach coating medication in your system, first.
13. Smoking delays the healing process.
14. Your teeth may be sensitive to cold temperatures for now. This is normal.