



Post-Operative Instructions: Oral Biopsy

Sometimes the after-effects of surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt, follow these guidelines or call our office. Please note that there is no additional charge for your post-operative care in this office.

Bleeding

In most cases, there will be minimal bleeding since the wound is often closed with sutures. If used, the sutures are usually the dissolving type that will fall out on their own 5-10 days after surgery. Some bleeding and oozing may be expected during the first 24 hours. Please keep gauze packed firmly over the surgery site for about 1 hour. Remove the gauze, then check the site for bleeding. If significant bleeding continues, a new gauze pack should be placed and firm pressure should be applied for 1 hour. Depending on the site of the biopsy, this may require finger pressure to hold the gauze in place. Repeat as necessary. A tea bag can be used if your gauze supply runs low. Do not rinse your mouth or suck through a straw for 24 hours.

Swelling

Depending on the procedure, you may or may not experience swelling. Swelling may be at a maximum about 2 or 3 days after surgery. Keeping your head elevated (in a recliner or on several pillows) will reduce swelling. Ice packs applied on the face near the area where surgery was done are helpful for the first day.

Oral Hygiene

The day following surgery, the mouth may be rinsed gently with a lukewarm saltwater solution (a ½ teaspoon of salt per half glass of lukewarm water) or prescribed mouthwash after each meal and at bedtime. The teeth should be brushed, but avoid the site of surgery for several days. Do not use hydrogen peroxide rinses or an irrigation device like a Waterpik® for at least 1 week.

Diet

A liquid to soft food diet is recommended the day of surgery. Avoid using straws, chewing over the surgical area, and extremely hot foods and foods with sharp edges (chips, pretzels, etc.) for a few days. Gradually resume your normal diet as tolerated.

Activity

You should keep physical activities to a minimum the day of surgery. If you are considering exercise, throbbing or bleeding may occur. If this occurs, you should discontinue exercising.

Nausea

A small amount of a carbonated drink every 5-6 hours will usually terminate nausea. Follow this with mild tea or clear soup and then easily digestible foods such as toast or crackers. Over-the-counter Dramamine® can be taken to reduce the nausea. If nausea continues, contact our office.



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Smoking

It is best to avoid smoking for at least 3 days after the surgery, as this increases the risk of infection.

Pain

Initially, you may have some discomfort. Tylenol® or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (ibuprofen, Advil®, Motrin®, or Aleve®) may be used for pain. The pain will gradually diminish. If medication was prescribed, use it according to the directions as needed. Make sure you get some type of food or a drink in your stomach before taking your prescription pain medication, as it can make you feel nauseated.

Pathology Reports

Most of the time, the lesion removed will be mailed to a pathologist to review. The pathologist will send back a formal report that tells us what the removed tissue actually turned out to be. Results will be reviewed when you return for a post-op visit about 1 week later, at which time the biopsy site will be examined. The pathology lab is a separate facility from our office. All billing questions regarding their services should be directed toward them.