

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Department

This leaflet explains: Post-operative instructions following oral surgery

Pain

- There should be no pain immediately after the operation due to the local anaesthetic used. This should last for 3-4 hours before sensation returns slowly and care should be taken to avoid biting the lip or tongue during this time.
- Pain tends to be worse on the 2nd or 3rd day but gradually improves over a period of 7-10 days.
- Simple painkillers such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen should control the pain.
- If there is a sudden increase in pain after a few days, this may indicate infection and the surgeon should be contacted.

Swelling

- This is common after surgery has been carried out in the mouth and jaw.
- The swelling reaches its maximum 2-3 days after surgery.
- The swelling should resolve 7-10 days after surgery.
- Bruising of the face occasionally occurs and can take up to 2 weeks to resolve.

Bleeding

- This should be minimal by the time you leave the surgery/hospital.
- Blood stained saliva is to be expected for 24-48 hours after the operation.
- **Do not rinse** the mouth for the first day. This may disturb the blood clot and cause bleeding.
- If persistent bleeding occurs, roll up a piece of gauze and place it over the wound and bite firmly over a period of at least 15 minutes.

Oral Hygiene

- The day after your surgery, use a warm salt-water mouthwash. The water should be as warm as possible and a spoonful of salt added. Take a mouthful and hold it still for a couple of minutes before spitting out.
- Repeat 4 times daily. This will help healing.
- Keep your teeth clean with gentle tooth brushing if possible. A tooth brush can be softened under a hot tap.

- Chlorhexidine (Corsodyl) mouthwash will help reduce plaque while tooth brushing is difficult.

Diet

- Your mouth opening may be restricted for about a week.
- Eating semi- solid food should be possible.
- Use your own discretion and gradually start eating normally according to your own pace.

Stitches

- If you have stitches (sutures) in your mouth, these should dissolve and drop out after a period of 7-10 days.

Medication

- Antibiotics after the operation may be required in some cases.
- If necessary, antibiotics and painkillers will be prescribed or advice given.

Time off work

- This will depend on your profession and the amount of surgery.
- The average time off work should be between 3-5 days, but there is a great deal of variation between individuals.

Follow-up

- If follow- up is needed, this will be arranged for you.