

Most commonly asked questions after Surgery

PLEASE READ YOUR PRE/POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTION SHEET AS MOST OF THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS WILL BE ON THAT SHEET.

1. When does the patient take the prescribed medication after the surgery?

We give all of our patients a discharge summary sheet that explains when to take their medication(s) the day of the surgery and continuing into the next few days. The patient will continue the regimen until the medication is gone. In most cases there is an antibiotic and anti-inflammatory that will need to be taken. The pain medication is optional.

2. What can I expect while driving the patient home and what if they fall asleep in the car?

If they are very sleepy you should lay the seat back slightly and make sure they have their seatbelt fastened so they don't slouch over/ lean forward and hurt themselves. If they are asleep when you arrive home, they may not respond to you calling their name. You may need to shake their shoulder a little or drop some water on their forehead or neck. This should wake them up.

3. What if I can't wake them up?

Remember the sedation is a sleeping pill so it's normal for them to fall asleep and sometimes can be a little difficult to wake them up if they've been asleep for a while. If water doesn't work, an ice pack on the neck or forehead may work better.

4. If the patient is sedated what do I do once I get them home?

Make sure to help them inside with some assistance by supporting them by the arm. Also, make sure the patient keeps their head up so they don't get dizzy. If the patient is very sleepy you may want to have someone help you, especially if there are stairs at home. The patient can rest on the couch or in their bed. If they need to use the restroom, please assist them. Keep a close eye on them while they are sedated.

5. If I'm unable to stay with the patient while they're sedated what should I do?

Make sure the patient is brought home and helped into the house. They need to lie down on either the couch or the bed. It would be a good idea to have their medications with their instructions available next to where they will be resting so they will know what to do and when to take their medications.

6. How long does the sedation last?

The sedation is in their system for up to 12 hours from the time it was taken. There is a "half life" of 6 hours, meaning the medication starts to wear off but is still in their system. They may start to feel normal in a few hours but still keep a close eye on them. Most likely the patient will sleep on and off for the rest of the day.

7. How do I give them their medication while they're numb? If they are still numb, they may have difficulty swallowing. Place a tissue or paper towel underneath their chin

and have them take the prescribed medication with liquid. Tilt their head back, and have them swallow. Then do a “Pill Check” to make sure they did swallow their medication.

8. What should they eat?

While they are numb they should be careful not to eat anything chewy or hot, as they could bite their cheek or tongue and/or they could burn themselves. While they are still numb, only liquids would be best. Once the numbing wears off, we recommend soft foods for the first day (i.e., milkshakes, soups, scrambled eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, pudding, jello, etc.) Once the numbing wears off they will be able to tell what’s comfortable to eat. It would be best if they continue eating soft foods for a few days depending on what type of periodontal treatment they had.

9. How do they keep the area clean and when can they floss and brush?

Right after surgery they will need to be very careful around the area treated. Avoid the surgical area(s) until the patient is instructed otherwise. The day after surgery they may start rinsing lightly with warm salt water and/or Peridex (chlorhexidine gluconate) if it was prescribed to help the area heal. They may start lightly brushing the teeth only once the periodontal dressing (“putty”) falls off. If no dressing was placed then they may start lightly brushing when the area feels more comfortable. **For patients with tissue grafts there are special instructions on the pre/post operative instruction sheet.**

10. If the “putty” (periodontal dressing) falls off right after the surgery or shortly after should I be concerned?

No, but do call the office to make sure it does not need to be replaced. Do not start brushing if the “putty” (dressing) falls off within the first 24 hours. Lightly rinse after the first 24 hours with warm salt water or Peridex (chlorhexidine gluconate) if prescribed. Wait a few days until the area feels more comfortable to start lightly brushing the teeth only.

11. What if the patient’s pain medication is not helping?

Please call our office and we will prescribe something stronger. If after office hours, please leave a message on the emergency number and we will return your call. In the meantime, if the pain medication says they can take two – try two every 4 hours. Be sure to keep taking the anti-inflammatory (Lodine/etodolac). It has 2 refills if needed. If the pain is too severe, call Dr. Eastman’s home phone number on the back of the patient’s instruction sheet.

12. If the patient had tissue grafts what should I expect when the “putty” (periodontal dressing) falls off?

Don’t be alarmed when the “putty” falls off. You will notice a material on the inside of the “putty” that closely resembles a tissue graft. This is not the patient’s graft, it is a material we place over the graft. If the “putty” comes off, the patient can lightly rinse with warm salt water. No flossing or brushing near the gum. The patient should not pull out their lip, this is VERY IMPORTANT. Also, no biting into any foods. Food should be cut into small pieces.