

## Oral Wound Care after Mohs Surgery

You have just had surgery in your mouth or on your lip. Special care must be used to prevent infection, promote healing, and assist in your comfort.

### If the wound is in your mouth

- Rinse your mouth after each meal, snack, or drink. Using tap water swish and spit several times to clean any food debris from your mouth.
- You may use a mouthwash or half-strength hydrogen peroxide, if told to do so.
- Have good oral hygiene. Brush your teeth twice each day.

### If the wound is on your lip

- Rinse your mouth with tap water after each meal, or after drinking beverages other than plain water.
- Apply a thin layer of Vaseline<sup>®</sup> (white petroleum) on the wound using a Q-tip<sup>®</sup>.
- Cover wound with a bandage or Band-Aid<sup>®</sup> to absorb any drainage. Change the bandage as it becomes wet or after each meal.

**Note:** Gelfoam<sup>®</sup> may have been put on your wound to stop bleeding. When it comes in contact with blood it turns black. This is normal. It will slowly come off as the wound is cleaned, but do not force it off.

**Caution:** Your lips and mouth may be numb for many hours after you go home. This will resolve.

- Avoid smoking.
- As your wound is healing, choose softer foods (soups, puddings, mashed potatoes, pasta, meatloaf, Jello<sup>®</sup>, etc) to prevent injury to your mouth or lips. Avoid drinking hot fluids.
- Do **not** use a straw.

### Activity

- **Avoid heavy activity for the first 2 days or as instructed.**
- No swimming or using hot tubs while your wound is healing.
- **Do not lift more than 15 pounds until your doctor says it is OK.**
- Avoid excessive chewing and talking.

### Swelling and Bruising

- Apply ice or cold compress to the wound area for 5 to 10 minutes at least once per hour, while awake to reduce swelling.
  - Do not apply ice directly onto the skin. Ice should be placed in a plastic bag then wrapped in a towel and then applied to wound area.
- Keep your head raised as much as possible.
- Avoid bending over lower than your heart or lifting heavy objects (i.e. more than 15 pounds)
- Popsicles, frozen yogurt or ice cream, or other cold foods also help reduce swelling.

### Pain Control

- If your wound hurts, **you may take Tylenol<sup>®</sup> (acetaminophen)** by following the package directions. Limit use of over the counter acetaminophen if you are given a prescription that contains additional Tylenol<sup>®</sup> (acetaminophen). Do not take medicines that contain aspirin or ibuprofen while your wound is healing unless approved by your provider.
- **If prescribed a narcotic pain medicine, please do not drink or drive while taking this medicine.**

**It is best to take narcotics with food to prevent nausea/vomiting. Narcotics may also cause constipation. You may use over the counter stool softeners as needed.**

- **If you have a sudden increase in pain that is not relieved by pain medicines and ice compress, please call the clinic where you were seen (see numbers listed below). You may have bleeding under your skin and need treatment.**

### **Bleeding**

- Avoid the use of alcohol, aspirin, medicines that contain aspirin, naproxen or ibuprofen while your wound is healing (unless approved or ordered by your doctor). They may increase the risk of bleeding.
- **If there is bleeding:**
  - Apply direct pressure by pressing firmly over the site for 10 minutes (timed by the clock). If bleeding has not stopped, use pressure for 10 more minutes (timed by clock).
  - **If bleeding still has not stopped, call the clinic where you were seen (see numbers listed below), or go to your local emergency room.**
  - Reinforce, but do not remove, the soiled bandage unless directed to do so. You could disturb the clot.
  - Hold an ice cube or cold compress to the bleeding area for 5-10 minutes

### **Infection**

Infection is not common when the wound is well cared for. Please call if you notice:

- Pus or smelly wound drainage.
- Redness spreading out from the wound.
- Warmth around the wound site.
- Fever greater than 101°F and/or flu-like symptoms.
- Increased pain or swelling of the wound.

### **After your wound has healed**

- Protect your lips by applying a lip balm or lipstick with sunscreen.

### **Phone numbers**

If you have any questions or concerns, call the Dermatology/Mohs Clinic where you were seen weekdays between 8:00 am-4:30 pm. After clinic hours, holidays & weekends, the clinic number will be answered by the paging operator. Ask for the Dermatology or Mohs Surgery doctor on call. Leave your name and phone number with area code. The doctor will call you back.

#### **UW East Mohs Clinic**

5249 E. Terrace Drive/Madison, WI 53718  
**(608) 265-1288, press option 2**

#### **UW West Mohs Clinic**

451 Junction Road/Madison, WI 53717  
**(608) 263-6226**

If you live out of the area and have a non-urgent concern, call **1-800-323-8942**, during regular clinic hours.