

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

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PLEASE READ BOTH SIDES OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. Sometimes the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of these instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt, follow these guidelines.

DAY OF SURGERY

FIRST HOUR

Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not being controlled. If active bleeding persists after one hour, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30-60 minutes. The gauze may be changed as necessary and may be dampened and/or fluffed for more comfortable positioning.

EXERCISE CARE

Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do NOT rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects or your fingers. You may brush your teeth gently. **DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours, since it is very detrimental to healing and can cause dry sockets.

OOZING

Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal, it may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the surgical areas and biting down firmly for 60 minutes.

STEADY BLEEDING

Bleeding should never be severe. If it is, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between your teeth rather than exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning fresh packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may **substitute a tea bag** (soaked in hot water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) for 20 to 36 minutes. Tampax or sanitary napkin can be used if you run out of gauze. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

SWELLING

Often there is some swelling associated with oral surgery. The third day following surgery is usually the worse day for swelling, more so with wisdom teeth than other procedures. Swelling will progressively decrease after the third day. You can minimize this by using a cold pack or ice bag wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to face or cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 12 to 24 hours after surgery. After 24 hours, it is usually best to switch from ice to moist heat to the same areas.

PAIN

Unfortunately most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication, and if you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you will be able to manage any discomfort better. Effects of pain medicines vary widely among individuals. **If you do not achieve adequate relief**, you may supplement each pill with an analgesic such as Ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil). Some people may even require two of the pain pills at one time during early stages (but that may add to the risk of upset stomach). Remember that the most severe discomfort is usually within the first 8 hours after the anesthetic wears off; after that your need for medicine should lessen.

NAUSEA

Nausea is not an uncommon event after surgery, and it is sometimes caused by stronger pain medicines. Nausea may be reduced by preceding each pill with a small amount of soft food, then taking the pill with a large volume of water. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize the pain medication, but call us if you do not feel better or if repeated vomiting is a problem.

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DIET

Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Temperature of the food doesn't matter, but avoid extremely hot foods. It is sometimes advisable, but not required, to confine the first day's intake to bland liquids or pureed foods (creamed soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.). Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., that may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you can progress to solid foods at your own pace. It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits as much as possible and follow instructions from us or your physician regarding your insulin schedule.

SHARP EDGES

If you feel sharp edges in the surgical areas with your tongue it is probably the bony walls which originally supported the teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the first week or two after surgery. They are not pieces of tooth and, if necessary, we will remove them. Please call the office to schedule an appointment.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS

MOUTH RINSES

Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use one-quarter teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily for the next five days. Do not use Hydrogen Peroxide or alcohol-based mouth rinses (like Scope) for 7 days.

BRUSHING

Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing of all areas, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

HOT APPLICATIONS

Apply warm compresses to the skin overlying areas of swelling (hot water bottle, moist hot towels, heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe those tender areas. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.

SYRINGE

If you were given an irrigating syringe at your first office check-up visit, start using it the second day after surgery to keep sockets clean. Fill it with warm water and irrigate any open sockets gently, especially after eating.

DRY SOCKET

Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: The first day of surgery is usually the most uncomfortable and there is some degree of swelling and stiffness. The second day you will usually be far more comfortable and, although still swollen, you can usually begin a more substantial diet. From the third day on **GRADUAL, STEADY IMPROVEMENT** should make the remainder of your post-operative course. If a **DRY SOCKET** occurs there is a noticeable, distinct, persistent throbbing pain in the jaw, often radiating toward the ear and forward along the jaw to cause other teeth to ache. This usually occurs around the 5th day. Dry sockets rarely occur before the 4th to 5th day. If you do not see steady improvement during the first week after surgery, don't suffer needlessly. Call the office and schedule a follow up appointment

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instruction will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the office. Please try to call during office hours; however a 24-hour answering service is available. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response. (397-9500)