

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE READ ALL OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY

Sometimes the after-effects of oral 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 for clarification. Our number is 919.387.3388.

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 controlled. The packs may be gently removed after one hour. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 60 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 45 to 60 minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water, ice water or iced tea and loosely fluff for more comfortable positioning.

Exercise Care: Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do **NOT** rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. You may brush your teeth gently. **PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours, since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause a dry socket. It is also important for you not to forcefully spit for at least 48 hours.

Oozing: Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. Bleeding may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the areas and biting on the gauze for 45 to 60 minutes at a time.

Persistent Bleeding: Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are only being clenched between your teeth and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas; therefore, they are not in the correct position. Try repositioning the packs. To control bleeding, you should bite on a moist gauze pad for at least 1 hour. After an hour has passed, you should check the color of the gauze. If it is red, you should change it. If it is pink, you should leave it in for an additional hour (If bleeding persists or becomes heavy, you may substitute a tea bag soaked in very hot water, squeezed damp-dry, cooled and wrapped in moist gauze for 45-60 minutes). Your bleeding should not stop immediately. It will gradually start slowing down after 4-6 hours. What we like to see is a progression. Initially, your gauze is going to be red, then pink and finally light pink/white. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

Swelling: Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery. If you have been prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed. Keeping your head elevated for 3 to 5 days when resting will help alleviate some swelling and discomfort. Pain and swelling are normal with oral surgery. Swelling will peak 2 to 3 days after surgery. This is normal. Pain and discomfort will peak in the first 3 to 5 days after surgery.

Pain: Unfortunately most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication. **If you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage your discomfort better.** Some patients find that stronger pain medicine causes nausea, but if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food, chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals. If you do not achieve adequate relief at first, you may supplement each pain pill with an analgesic such as ibuprofen. You may take up to 600mg of ibuprofen every 6 hours. **If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office. If you anticipate needing more prescription medication for the weekend, you must call for a refill during weekday business hours.**

Nausea: Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometimes pain medications are the cause. Nausea can be reduced by preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food and taking the pill with a large volume of water. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better. Classic cola or ginger ale drinks may help with nausea.

Diet: Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to confine the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc). It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. 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 a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

Sharp Edges: If you feel something hard or sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls that once supported the extracted teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office.

SECOND AND THIRD DAYS AFTER SURGERY

Mouth Rinses: Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use 1/4 teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking 5 minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least 2 to 3 times daily. If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office. If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, DO NOT use it for the first 5 days. Then use it daily according to the instructions until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket.

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

Hot Applications: You may apply warm compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (hot water bottle, hot moist towels, heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.

Healing: Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: Swelling usually peaks in the first 2 to 3 days. Pain will usually peak in the first 3 to 5 days. If your surgery was more difficult, time periods may be extended. The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the office where you had surgery. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern. **PLEASE NOTE: Telephone calls for narcotic (pain killer) prescription renewal are ONLY accepted during office hours.** There is always a doctor on call if you need to reach them after hours, please call the office at 919-387-3388 to reach one of them.