



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. If you have any questions, follow these guidelines or call our office for clarification.

Day of Surgery:

First Hour: Remember that gauze does not stop bleeding, it just absorbs blood. What stops bleeding is the continuous pressure directly on the surgical area. 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 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30 to 45 minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff for comfortable positioning.

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 30 to 45 minutes at a time.

Persistent bleeding: bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy, you may substitute a tea bag (soaked in very hot water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) for 20 to 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

Exercise Care: Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do NOT rinse vigorously or probe the area with any object including your finger. You may brush your teeth gently. If you have an electric toothbrush, turn it off and use it as a manual toothbrush when near the extraction site.

Smoking: Please do not smoke for at least 5 days, since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause a dry socket.

Swelling: Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. To minimize swelling, keep the head up at all times for about 3 days (reclined chair, several pillows) take ibuprofen (for both pain and swelling) unless you have adverse reactions to it, and use ice pack on the cheek—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.

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 any discomfort better. Some patients find that stronger pain medication causes nausea, but if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of soft food, it will reduce the chance that nausea will occur. 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 aspirin or ibuprofen. Some patients may even require two of the pain pills at one time. Remember that the most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthesia wears off; after that, your need for medication should lessen. If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medication at frequent intervals, please call our office. If you anticipate needing more prescription medication for the weekend, you must call for a refill through our office during the week.

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 fluid and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better. Classic Coca Cola may help with nausea.

Diet: You do not want to develop infection in the surgical area. Do not push any food inside because bacteria can easily grow in the blood clot mixed with food. It will be helpful to eat a non-chewing diet (anything you can eat without chewing like soup, mashed potato, refried beans, cottage cheese, yogurt, etc.) for about 3 days and slowly advance to soft food (meat loaf, scrambled egg, overcooked pasta, banana, etc.) over 1 week. Do not spend too much time with food in the mouth to minimize the chance of infection. Eat any nourishing food that can be eaten with comfort. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may be lodged in the socket area. 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 which once supported the extracted tooth/teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call our office.

Instructions for the second and third days:

Hygiene: you want to keep the surgical area clean to prevent infection but gently and carefully in the first 1-2 weeks because you want to wash the food but not the blood clot or bone graft material out of the extraction socket and you don't want to disturb the surgical area. Keep it clean thoroughly but gently for 1-2 weeks.

Mouth Rinses: Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use ¼ 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.

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: the first two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more

comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement. 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 five 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.

Antibiotics: if you take antibiotics and develop diarrhea, you must stop taking antibiotics immediately. If the diarrhea does not stop, you have to see a physician to rule out the possibility of C. diff colitis (clostridium difficile colitis). Please call our office if you are experiencing diarrhea.

Sinus Precautions

Because of the close relationship between upper back teeth and the sinus, a communication between the sinus and mouth sometimes results from surgery. That complication has occurred in your case, which often heals slowly and with difficulty. Certain precautions will assist healing and we ask that you faithfully follow these instructions:

1. Take prescriptions as directed.
2. Do not forcefully spit for 5 days.
3. Do not smoke for 5 days.
4. Do not use a straw for 5 days.
5. Do not forcefully blow your nose for at least 3 months, even though your sinus may feel “stuffy” or there may be some nasal drainage.
6. Try not to sneeze; it will cause undesired sinus pressure. If you must sneeze, keep your mouth open.
7. Eat only soft foods for several days, always trying to chew on the opposite side of your mouth.
8. Do not rinse vigorously for several days. Gentle salt water swishes may be used.

Slight bleeding from the nose is not uncommon for several days after surgery.

Please keep our office advised of any changes in your condition, especially if drainage or pain increases. It is important that you keep all future appointments until this complication has resolved.

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 our office. A 24-hour answering service is available to contact the doctor on call after hours. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your questions or concerns. PLEASE NOTE: telephone calls for narcotic (pain killer) prescriptions renewal are ONLY accepted during office hours.