



Tooth Extraction Post-Operative Instructions

The following instruction may apply. However, many times the aftereffects of oral surgery are minimal. When in doubt follow these guidelines or call our office for clarification.

DAY OF SURGERY

FIRST HOUR: Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs which have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Avoid changing the gauze for the first hour unless the bleeding is not controlled. The packs may be removed after one hour. If active bleeding persists, place same amount of gauze and bite down firmly to obtain pressure on the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30 - 45 minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water 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. DO NOT SMOKE for at least 72 hours, smoking is very detrimental to the healing process and may cause dry sockets.

OOZING: Intermittent bleeding and/or oozing overnight is normal. Bleeding may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the areas and biting down for 30 - 45 minutes at a time.

PERSISTENT BLEEDING: Bleeding should never be severe. If there is persistent bleeding, usually the gauze is being clenched between teeth only and is not exerting pressure on the surgical site. Reposition 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 – 30 minutes. 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 twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery. If you have been prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, take 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 your first prescribed dose of medication before anesthetic has worn off, the discomfort is usually tolerated better. Some patients find that stronger pain medicine causes nausea, but if you precede each dose with a small amount of food, chances of nausea will be reduced. The side effects of pain medication vary from individual to individual. If you do not achieve adequate relief at first, you may supplement each pain medication dose with an analgesic such as aspirin or ibuprofen. Some patients may require two doses of pain medication at one time. Remember, the most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic wears off and your need for pain medication should lessen. If you find you need more pain medication than the recommended dose, please call our office. You must call during weekday business hours for prescription refills.

NAUSEA: Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Pain medications are sometimes the cause. Precede each pain medication dose with a small amount of soft food and a large amount of water. Keep drinking plenty of clear fluids and minimize doses of medication as soon as possible. Classic Coca Cola may also help with nausea. If you do not start to feel better after trying the following, please call us.

DIET: DO NOT use a straw for the first seven days after surgery. Eat nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods and beverages. It is sometimes advised but not required to confine the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soup, pudding, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.). It is best to avoid foods such as nuts, seeds, popcorn or anything crunchy or hard, as these may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days as the area heals, you may progress to solid foods. Avoid skipping meals, the more nourished you are the sooner you will gain strength, have less discomfort and most importantly, heal. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

SHARP EDGES: If you feel hard or sharp edges in the surgical area(s), it is likely you are feeling the bone which once supported the extracted tooth/teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone can work themselves out during the following week or longer. If they cause any discomfort, or if you have questions or concerns regarding this, please call our office.

SECOND- AND THIRD DAYS FOLLOWING SURGERY

MOUTH RINSES: Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use ¼ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 oz. glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution. It should take about five minutes to use the entire glass. You can rinse as often as you would like but rinse a minimum of two to three times daily.

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

HOT APPLICATIONS: Beginning 24 hours after your procedure, 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 help decrease swelling and stiffness.

HEALING: Normal healing after an extraction should be as follows: The first six hours are the most uncomfortable. The following 48 hours, the site will usually have some degree of swelling accompanied with discomfort. On the third day, you should feel more comfortable but with some residual swelling and begin resuming a more sustainable diet. After the third day following surgery, healing should gradually continue. If you do not see continued improvement, please call our office. If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, **DO NOT** use it within the first five days after surgery. Then use it as directed until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and there is no chance of food particles being lodged into the socket.

It is our desire you have a smooth and speedy recovery. Following the instructions given to you will assist you. If you have any questions or concerns about your progress, please call our office so we can further assist you to recovery. If you call after business hours, our voicemail will have an emergency number you where can reach our doctors. Calling during business hours when possible will allow for a quicker response to your questions or concerns.

PLEASE NOTE: Calls regarding narcotic (pain medication) prescription renewals are **ONLY** accepted during office hours.