

Post Operative Instructions for Extractions

Surgery of the mouth is similar to surgery in other parts of the body and requires careful attention to postoperative instructions.

A. **Wound Care:** Do not disturb the wound. Do not rinse your mouth or use a mouthwash the day of surgery. If you smoke, please refrain from doing so for at least four days following surgery. Avoid probing the wound. A waterpick should not be used during the early healing period. The above activities will cause complications with wound healing.

B. **Swelling:** Facial swelling occurs following most extraction and oral surgery procedures. To help minimize swelling, apply an ice pack to the face for 20 minutes; remove for 20 minutes; alternating back and forth throughout the first day after surgery. To be most effective, the applications of ice packs should begin as soon as possible. The maximum amount of facial swelling normally occurs two days following the surgery. Once present, it can remain swollen for upwards of 7 days; discomfort may persist for 10 days.

C. **Pain:** A variable amount of pain follows most extractions and oral surgery procedures. If you are given a prescription for pain tablets, please use as directed. Many times analgesics are prescribed on a scheduled basis. Excessive or increasing pain after the third day of surgery is not normal. Should this occur, please call the clinic at your earliest convenience. You may need to return to the clinic for further evaluation.

D. **Bleeding:** A slight amount of bleeding or oozing is to be expected up to 24 hours or more. These conditions are no cause for alarm. Following your oral surgery, a small sterile gauze compress was placed on the wound and you were asked to maintain steady biting pressure on the gauze.

If excessive bleeding should occur, the following procedure should be done:

1. Gently wipe excess blood from the mouth.
2. Place a clean, sterile gauze pad directly over the area which is bleeding and maintain a steady, firm bite on the gauze for 30 minutes. If not successful, repeat procedure with gauze soaked in a strong solution of tea (or bite on a moist tea bag) for another 30 minutes.
3. Remain quiet, sit upright, and apply an ice pack to the face; do not spit.
4. If the previously mentioned measures do not succeed, call the clinic or your doctor at his home number.

E. **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. Cola drinks that have less carbonation may help with nausea.

F. **Discoloration:** Facial discoloration (black and blue bruising) often follows many extractions and oral surgery procedures. Discoloration is normal and is no cause for alarm. It may persist as long as several weeks.

G. **Jaw Stiffness:** For several days following most surgical procedures, the jaw may become somewhat stiff. Should jaw stiffness progress or persist after one week, notify your dentist.

H. **Diet:** Soft foods and liquids are recommended. Try not to skip any meals and keep up normal fluid intake.

I. **Mouth Rinses:** The day following surgery begin using warm salt water rinses after meals and several times during the day as directed by you dentist. One-half teaspoonful of table salt in a full glass of warm water is recommended.

J. **Physical Activity/Rest:** Keep physical activity to a minimum. Avoid athletic and strenuous activities and get plenty of rest.

K. **Stitches:** Following many extractions stitches are placed in the gums. Your doctor will advise you if a return appointment for stitch removal is necessary.

L. **Dry Socket:** Despite the best of care, a small percentage of patients who have teeth removed will develop what is commonly known as “dry socket.” A “dry socket” is a condition where the wound healing sequence is disturbed or altered after removal of a tooth. A “dry socket” usually develops about 3-10 days after removal of a tooth. Typically a patient will note increased pain at the extraction site. The aching pain, which steadily worsens, may radiate along the jaw and into the ear. If you exhibit these symptoms please call our clinic at your earliest convenience. You may need to return to the clinic for further evaluation.

M. **Brushing:** Resume your normal oral hygiene routine within 24 hours following 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.

N. **Numbness:** Local anesthetics may be effective for as long as 24-48 hours. Should you experience numbness beyond this period, notify your dentist.