

## ROUTINE POST-SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

Following these post-surgery directions is the most important thing you can do to aid the healing process. The removal of impacted teeth is a surgical procedure. You can minimize unnecessary pain and infection or swelling if you follow these instructions carefully.

### Gauze Packs to Control Bleeding

After your procedure, you will be biting down on a gauze pad that has been placed over the surgical area. Maintain light, constant pressure over the gauze pad for at least 1 hour. If active bleeding continues after that time, replace the gauze pad with a fresh, slightly moistened one and maintain light pressure for an additional hour.

If active bleeding persists, a moistened tea bag (non-herbal) may be substituted for the gauze pad. Do not use gauze or tea bags in the mouth after the first day. Some blood in the saliva is to be expected for 1-2 days following surgery.

### Discomfort and Pain Control

It is best to take your pain medication before the effect of the local anesthetic wears off completely. Often there is a tingling sensation that accompanies the lessening of the anesthetic effect. Take all pain medication with food, and refrain from drinking alcohol, driving or operating machinery while medicated.

Ice packs (or frozen bags of peas or corn) should be placed on the skin at the surgery site for 1-2 days after your procedure. Do not put ice packs inside your mouth or in direct contact with the surgical area.

### Antibiotics

If antibiotics have been prescribed, take them according to the directions on the label. Please contact the office if there are any questions in regards to your prescriptions. Please be aware that antibiotics and pain medication can temporarily alter the effectiveness of birth control pills.

### Fever

You may experience a low-grade fever 24-48 hours after surgery. If your temperature rises to 101° F or higher, please call our office.

### Nausea and Vomiting

Nausea can occur following the use of a general anesthesia. Small amounts of clear carbonated beverages such as 7-Up, Sprite or ginger ale taken every hour for 2-3 hours will usually help. Dramamine, Emetrol or Pepcid AC are available without a prescription and can also be helpful. Please contact our office before using any over-the-counter medications.

### Swelling and Discoloration

Swelling normally increases on the third day after surgery and recedes gradually. Keep your head elevated (resting on 2 pillows) for 1-2 days after surgery. Using ice packs for the first 1-2 days will also help reduce swelling and relieve discomfort. You may experience some bruising on your face and/or neck. Discoloration will range from blue to yellowish green and may last for up to one week.

Do not apply heat to your face unless instructed by our office.

### Sore Arm

A small amount of bruising or discomfort is possible around the I.V. site. A warm, moist washcloth placed over the area for 15 minutes, 3-4 times a day will make it feel better.

### Stiffness of the Jaws (Trismus)

You may have difficulty opening your mouth for a few days following surgery due to a stiffening of the jaw muscles called Trismus. Minimize your chances of experiencing this stiffness by opening and stretching your mouth several times an hour for the first 24 hours after surgery.

### Placement of Dental Implants

If you have received dental implants, it is important to be cautious with the surgical site initially.

Often a metal healing cap is placed at the gum level. Avoid rinsing, spitting, chewing on or touching the wound on the day of surgery. If you have received a prescription for Peridex (mouthwash), please follow the directions on the bottle.

### Diet

Good nutrition and fluid intake are important after surgery. On the day of surgery, a liquid or soft diet is suggested. Do not use a straw for 5 days after surgery. A few post-operative food suggestions include: milk shakes, instant breakfast, soups, yogurts, scrambled eggs or mashed potatoes.

Avoid hard, crunchy, seeded, spicy or whole-grain foods like nuts, popcorn, seeded berries and hot peppers. Avoid alcoholic beverages for 24 hours, especially when taking pain medication. You can resume your normal diet as your comfort level allows.

### Keep Your Mouth Clean

We encourage you to brush your teeth—avoiding the surgery site—before bed on the night of your surgery. The day after surgery you should begin rinsing with warm salt water after meals and at bedtime. Use 1/2 teaspoon of salt per 8 ounces of warm water and continue the rinse schedule for at least one week. Please refrain from using Waterpiks, mouthwash or hydrogen peroxide until recommended by the doctor, as they will delay the healing process.

### Sutures

Dissolvable stitches are often used. They generally fall out within 4-5 days, but don't worry if they fall out earlier. Sutures requiring removal will be taken out during your post-operative visit.

### Extraction Site

You may notice a voided space or "hole" in your gum after an extraction. The cavity will gradually fill in with new tissue. Gentle salt water rinses beginning the day after surgery will help to keep the extraction site clean.

### Immediate Dentures

If a new denture or partial was placed during your surgery, do not remove it for 24 hours. Rinsing 3-4 times per day can begin 24 hours after surgery. You should leave your dentures in place as much as possible during the first week following extractions, unless you're instructed otherwise.

### Potential Complications

- Do not be alarmed by numbness of the lip, chin or tongue after surgery. This is usually a temporary occurrence.
- Occasionally, patients may feel hard or sharp projections in the mouth with their tongue. These objects are part of the bony wall that supported the tooth and usually smooth out on their own. If they are painful, they can be removed by one of our doctors.
- The corners of your mouth may be dry or cracked from being stretched during surgery. This can be treated with an over-the-counter ointment.
- Painful swallowing is sometimes a complication of oral surgery. This usually subsides within 2-3 days.
- A dry socket is when a blood clot gets dislodged prematurely from the tooth socket. Symptoms of a dry socket are pain unrelieved by medication, either at the surgical site or in the ear, occurring 3-4 days after surgery. Please contact our surgical team if you think this has occurred.
- If your post-operative pain or swelling worsens or you develop unusual symptom, please call our office for instructions.