

# Post-Op Instructions Extractions

Follow these instructions carefully to ensure the successful healing of your tooth extraction.

## When to call us

It is normal to experience some discomfort for several days after a tooth extraction, but call us right away if you have:

- ❖ Heavy or increased bleeding
- ❖ Pain or swelling that increases or continues beyond two or three days
- ❖ A bad taste or odor in your mouth
- ❖ A reaction to the medication



## During the first 24 hours

**It is important that a blood clot forms** on the extraction site to stop bleeding, reduce pain, and speed healing. To protect the clot and avoid the pain of dry socket:

- ❖ Bite on a gauze pad firmly for 30-60 minutes. Blood and saliva mix in the mouth and make it look like there is more bleeding than there really is. Some oozing is normal; however, after 1 hour, repeat with a clean gauze pad if oozing is profuse. The site could ooze for as long as 24 hours.
- ❖ Don't spit, and don't suck on candies or through a straw.
- ❖ Don't rinse your mouth, and don't brush or floss next to the site.
- ❖ Don't smoke or use tobacco. Avoid tobacco for at least 72 hours because it slows healing.
- ❖ Don't sneeze or cough, so have sinus or allergy medication on hand if necessary.
- ❖ Limit yourself to calm activities and elevate your head with pillows when you lie down to reduce bleeding.
- ❖ Don't drink hot, carbonated, or alcoholic drinks, and avoid hot or spicy foods.

**To control discomfort**, take pain medication before the anesthetic has worn off or as recommended.



*Discussing post-op instructions*

**To keep swelling to a minimum**, use an ice bag over the area, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off.

**When the numbness has worn off completely**, drink lots of fluids and eat only soft nutritious foods, chewing on the opposite side.

## After the first 24 hours

**Begin to eat normally** as soon as it's comfortable.

**Resume brushing and flossing**, but clean gently around the site for about a week.

**If antibiotics were prescribed**, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.

**Reduce soreness or swelling** by applying moist heat. Swelling usually starts to go down after 48 hours.

**Further reduce swelling** by rinsing your mouth very gently with warm salt water. Use about one teaspoon of salt per glass of warm water. Rinse two to three times a day for the week following the extraction.

## More detailed instructions & Answers to FAQ

- Anesthesia often leaves the lips, teeth, tongue, and even the nose area numb after an oral operation: avoid chewing and hot liquids until numbness wears off to prevent accidental injury.
- Taking Ibuprofen or Tylenol prior to completely the local anesthesia wears off can significantly reduce pain and swelling. Temperature and pressure sensitivity, as well as gum soreness, is to be expected in the days after your procedure.
  - The following is safe and effective pain control method:
    - Alternate between:
      - 2 tablets of Acetaminophen/APAP 325mg (650mg total) and
      - 3 tablets of Ibuprofen 200 mg (600 mg total)
    - Take the medications 3-4 hours apart as needed for pain.
    - **Only if you experience severe pain, take the prescribed narcotic (opioid) medication (Tylenol with codeine or Hydrocodone)**
- After a tooth extraction, it is crucial that a blood clot forms in the extraction socket. **Do not smoke, drink through a straw, or rinse forcefully for at least 5-7 days after the procedure.** Drink directly from the glass or use a spoon.
- Some bleeding following oral surgery is to be expected, and slight oozing may persist for the first 24-48 hours after surgery. Firm pressure applied over the surgical area(s) with gauze or a moistened tea bag will control the bleeding. Do not chew on the gauze. If bleeding starts again, put gauze, a clean white cloth, or a damp teabag over the bleeding area and bite on it with firm, steady pressure for one hour. Do not chew on it. **Do not take aspirin or aspirin products, since they may prolong bleeding.** If pressure on the surgical site does not control bleeding, then please call us at (832)900-9978 and leave a message with our after-hours answering service.
- Some degree of swelling and discomfort following the surgery is to be expected. Discoloration and a slight stiffness of the jaw can be normal following surgery. Do not be alarmed, swelling is expected to peak on the third day and may last for several days. Good nutrition must be maintained following oral surgery. PLENTY of liquids are needed at first, and the diet should be increased to soft or regular foods as soon as you are able. Do not miss meals, even though soreness and jaw stiffness may be present. Examples of food which you may consume following oral surgery are: non-acidic juices, smoothies, ice cream, puddings, yogurt, Jell-O®, soup broth, scrambled eggs, pureed or blended foods.
- Use the prescribed medication as directed for pain. It is recommended your first dose of pain medication be taken before the anesthetic wears off to help control postoperative discomfort more effectively.
- Good hygiene is important for normal healing. You can brush teeth unaffected by the surgery, along with gentle tooth brushing of the teeth adjacent to the surgical area. Avoid undue irritation to the surgical site. Do not begin mouth rinses until the first day following surgery. At that time use ¼ teaspoon of salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water 4-6 times a day.
- **Oral surgical procedures are often accompanied by facial swelling and this should not be cause for alarm.** A noticeable increase in this swelling may occur during the second or third post-operative day and is expected. You may help minimize the swelling by applying an ice bag on the face 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off until bedtime the night of surgery, then discontinue. The day after surgery and for several days after, moist, warm heat applied over swelling can be helpful. Resting with the head slightly

elevated the first one to two days following surgery will make your post-operative course more comfortable.

- **Avoid physical exertion or exercise the day of surgery.** Increase your activity level as tolerated. Sutures (stitches) may have been used to repair the surgical site. They will generally dissolve in 5-7 days. However, it is common for the sutures to loosen or become dislodged in 2-3 days or remain beyond 7 days; this is acceptable and should not be cause for concern. A white/brown/yellow area will likely form in the region of the surgical site, this is part of the normal healing process and **does not mean an infection**. After an extraction the tooth socket (hole in the jaw) will remain open for 4-6 weeks. This is part of the normal healing process. Keep the socket clean of food particles by rinsing with water after each meal until the socket is closed. Antibiotics can sometimes render birth control pills less effective. If you have been prescribed an antibiotic and you are on birth control pills, use an additional method of contraception for the remainder of your current menstrual cycle. Lactobacillus acidophilus (Bacid) is a probiotic that has been used to re-establish the normal consistency of bacteria in the gastrointestinal tract (stomach and intestines). Antibiotics kill bacteria, but don't discriminate between "friendly and "unfriendly" microorganisms, so the balance between good and bad bacteria in the intestines can be upset resulting in diarrhea. Therefore, you may choose to take a probiotic (found over-the-counter) while on antibiotics.
- Surgical procedures require the use of pain medication post-operatively which can make you drowsy, therefore, do not drive while taking such medicine. 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 during regular office hours. After office hours a 24-hour answering service is available to contact your dentist. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern.

#### **Important Opioid Safety Tips:**

1. Never take an opioid pain reliever unless it is prescribed for you.
2. Always take opioids as directed. Do not take more opioid or take it more often than is prescribed for you.
3. Do not use opioids with alcohol or other drugs.
4. Protect and lock up your opioids in a safe place at all times, and properly dispose of leftover medicine.
5. Never share opioids with another person; it is illegal and very dangerous.
6. Be prepared for opioid emergencies. Know signs of trouble and what to do.
7. Always read instructions that come with your opioid prescription.

**Do not give medications to friends. Doctors prescribe drugs based on a person's specific symptoms and medical history. A drug that works for you could be dangerous for someone else. When in doubt about proper disposal, talk to your pharmacist.**