

Post Operative Instructions

The healing process following oral surgery is usually fast and not very complicated--the initial healing period typically takes roughly one to two weeks. Complete healing of the gum tissues takes about three to four weeks, and bone can take about six to eight months to heal depending on your care for the area.

Some discomfort, bleeding and swelling should be expected in the first 48-72 hours after surgery while your mouth begins to heal. If you have any questions or concerns please give our office a call.

What to do after surgery: If possible, your activities should be limited for several hours. This helps reduce bleeding. You should avoid drinking or using dangerous equipment if narcotics are prescribed. **PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE FOR AT LEAST 3 DAYS.** Smoking can interfere with the healing process, promote bleeding, and cause a dry socket (see below). However, it is recommended to not smoke or use tobacco for seven days after surgery.

Bleeding and Swelling: Bite on the moistened gauze pack for two hours following your surgery to control the bleeding--it is normal for some blood to ooze from the surgery for up to 36 hours. Change the dressing every 30 to 40 minutes depending on the amount of bleeding. **DO NOT SUCK ON THE EXTRACTION SITE.** To help reduce swelling and reduce pain, apply an ice pack to your cheek in 15 minute intervals for the first 2 days after surgery--if procedure was performed on both sides, alternate using the ice pack on each side. **Swelling usually reaches its maximum within 36 hours and decreases after that.**

Medications: Some discomfort is normal after surgery. Take your medication **BEFORE** the local anesthesia wears off to insure it will be working, to keep you in the least amount of pain. Analgesic tablets (Tylenol, Motrin, or non-aspirin) can be taken every 6-8 hours or as directed. **A side effect of aspirin is increased bleeding by inhibiting blood clotting.** If a prescription medication was prescribed, it should be taken for 2-3 days after surgery or as directed. If antibiotics were prescribed, you should carefully follow the instructions and finish the antibiotics until they are completely gone.

Rinsing and Oral Hygiene: For several days after the extraction, it is important to keep the area as clean as possible. This will prevent infection and promote healing. You may rinse your mouth **gently** with warm salt water (one half teaspoon of salt in an 8 ounce cup of warm water). the day following surgery , you should rinse several times per day--especially after meals--and continue rinsing for about a week until your gums have healed. Do not directly brush the extraction site for the first 3-4 days after surgery to prevent the blood clot in the socket from dislodging. Additionally., do not use full strength commercial mouthwash for the first week.

Diet: To help the healing process, good nutrition is important. During the first few days after surgery, a diet of soft foods is best--Jell-O, ice cream, mashed potatoes, soft cereals (grits, oatmeal, etc.), pasta, soups, etc. Some patients don't tolerate the thought or sight of food after surgery; in this case, drink small amounts of Gatorade or other protein drinks until your appetite returns. Be sure to avoid hot foods and liquids such as coffee or tea until the numbness wears off and feeling has returned. Additionally, avoid drinking through a straw for the first week after surgery.

Sutures: Sutures can be used to position the tissues. Most sutures will dissolve by themselves and come out within 3-5 days. In the case where sutures require removal, you will need to have them to be removed about a week after surgery.

Stiff jaw: Trismus or tightness of the jaw muscles is expected following surgical procedures. Difficulty opening your mouth for the first few days is to be expected. If tightness persists after 5 days, moist heat application can be helpful.

Dry Socket: Dry socket is a form of delayed healing which sometimes occurs when teeth have been removed. The symptoms of dry socket are sudden onset of continuous pain beginning 3-5 days after to tooth has been extracted. There is usually no swelling associated with a dry socket. There may be a bad or metallic taste, this is not true in all cases. If you develop an increase in pain between 3-5 days after surgery, please call the office. The treatment of a dry socket is simple and involves placing medication in the socket.