

# INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING TOOTH REMOVAL

The removal of a tooth/teeth is a routine surgical procedure. However, the after-effects of oral surgery vary per individual. Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain, swelling and risk of infection can be minimized if these instructions are followed carefully.

## IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY

- The gauze pad placed over the surgical site should be kept in place for a half hour. Soft biting pressure should be maintained with minimal talking or manipulation. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and discarded. If bleeding persists repeat the process.
- Vigorous mouth rinsing, spitting and drinking through a straw should be avoided. This may initiate bleeding by causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.
- Take the prescribed pain medication as soon as you get home, prior to the local anesthetic (dental freezing) wearing off.
- Restrict your activities the day of surgery. Return home immediately following discharge from the office. Anesthetic effects vary by individual, and you may feel drowsy for a period of time following surgery. Rest, lie down with your head elevated until all the effects of the anesthetic have disappeared. Place the ice packs on the sides of your face where the surgery was performed to help reduce swelling.

Swelling, discomfort, bleeding and restricted jaw function are normal and to be expected. They can be minimized with the following instructions.

## BLEEDING

One of the most common concerns after surgery is bleeding. A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Some oozing is normal for 24-48 hours following surgery and should not cause concern. Excessive or prolonged bleeding may be controlled by:

1. Relax and avoid excitation this increases the heart rate and blood pressure. Sit upright and avoid activity. Also insure that you have adequate pain control using the provided pain medications.
2. First rinse the mouth vigorously with warm water or wipe any old clots from the surgical site with a gauze pad to remove any old blood from your mouth.
3. Place a gauze pad over the surgical site, behind the last molar tooth, and bite firmly, so that your teeth come together, for 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary.
4. If bleeding persists, you can bite on a moisten tea bag for 30 minutes. The tannic acid in the tea helps form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels.
5. If excessive bleeding persists longer than 2-3 hours, call the 24 hour contact number 1-866-676-2233 for further instructions.

**Do not go to sleep with gauze in your mouth.**

## PAIN

Unfortunately, most surgeries are accompanied by some degree of discomfort. To help reduce your symptoms we advise you to begin taking some pain medications within 2 hours following your surgery. This ensures that the medication is acting prior to the local anesthetic wearing off, when it may be more difficult to control the pain. An anti-inflammatory pain medication, such as Advil or Ibuprofen, can be taken immediately following surgery and continue for 2 days following surgery whether there is discomfort or not.

It is not uncommon to have a **secondary** increase in discomfort 2-3 days following surgery that lasts for 24-48 hours. If this discomfort continues to worsen following this time you can call the office for further instructions.

A stiff jaw with tenderness opening and closing the mouth is normal following surgery and typically last a couple of days. Resting the jaw, eating softer foods and warm heat starting 36 hours after surgery will help reduce this occurrence and assist in the healing.

## SWELLING

Swelling is a normal reaction to any surgery and is to be expected. It is typically located around the mouth, cheeks, lips and eyes. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and can continue to increase for up to 48 to 72 hours post-operatively. To prevent or minimize swelling, cold packs (zip lock with crushed ice or frozen peas) should be applied to the face adjacent to the surgical area when you return home whether swelling is present or not. The ice packs should be left on continuously while you are awake on the surgical day. The following day the packs can be applied to the cheeks for 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off as tolerated. After 36 hours, ice has no beneficial effect. If swelling or jaw stiffness persists for several days, there is no cause for alarm. This is a normal reaction to surgery and will slowly dissipate. The application of moist heat to the sides of the face after the 48 hours following surgery is beneficial in reducing the amount of the swelling and relaxing sore facial muscles.

If you were prescribed Dexamethasone for the control of swelling it should be taken as prescribed beginning the night of the surgery. Occasionally, this medication will cause tingling in your hands and feet. If this happens you can stop the medication if it is intolerable.

## ORAL HYGIENE

Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential to reduce pain and lessen the incidence of infection. No rinsing of any kind should be performed until the day following surgery. You can brush your teeth the night of surgery with a small amount of toothpaste or warm, salt water but rinse gently. The day after surgery you should begin rinsing at least 5 to 6 times a day with a cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt. Avoid using Scope or any commercial mouth rinses as alcohol contained within them slows the healing process.

If the corners of your mouth were dry at the time of surgery they may become cracked or red during healing. You can keep the lips and area moist with an ointment such as Vaseline or Blistex.

## ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics, if prescribed to prevent infection, should be taken as prescribed until finished. It is not uncommon to feel slightly nauseated or itchy when beginning the antibiotics. If you develop a rash or other unfavorable reaction call the office for further information.

If you are currently taking oral contraceptives (Birth Control), for any reason other than regulation, you should use an alternate method of birth control for the remainder of this cycle.

## STITCHES & EXTRACTION SOCKET

Sutures are placed to minimize bleeding and to help with healing. They will dissolve on their own within 1 week. Sometimes they become dislodged early with cleaning or if vomiting occurs. This is no cause for alarm. Unless significant bleeding begins you do not need to have it replaced. The extraction holes are normal. The site will gradually fill in with new tissue over the next 3 to 4 weeks. It is important to keep the area clean with gentle rinsing or by using the irrigation syringe provided by placing the tip of the syringe **into** the socket and gently irrigate with warm salt water.

## DRY SOCKET

A small percentage of patients can experience an increase in jaw discomfort 5 to 6 days after surgery. The blood clot at the surgical site may be prematurely lost leading to exposure of bone to the mouth - this is a dry socket. There will be a noticeable, localized persistent pain in the jaw area, often radiating toward the ear and forward along the jaw which may cause other teeth to ache. You may also experience increased bad breath or a bad taste in the mouth. Cigarette smoking and poor oral hygiene increase the risk of dry socket! This discomfort will pass and can often be managed with the pain medications prescribed. If you do not see an improvement after the first few days or if the pain is too severe, please call the office to organize a new pain medication prescription or possible placement of a medicated dressing into the extraction site by our nurses.

Your case is individual. No two mouths are alike. It is my desire that your recovery be as smooth and easy as possible. If you have any questions about your progress or any symptoms you are experiencing, please call the office at 780.760.1501 during the day, or nights or weekends at 1-866-676-2233 to obtain advice and, if necessary, organize an additional appointment.