



Tooth Extraction Post-Operative Instructions

Our goal is for your healing process after an extraction to be as comfortable as possible. The removal of teeth is a surgical procedure, and post-operative care is imperative. Please follow all instructions carefully to avoid any unnecessary pain and possible infection.

If you have any difficulties or concerns following your surgery, please do not hesitate to call us or return to our office for a follow-up exam.

Immediately Following Surgery:

- Keep the gauze pad placed over the surgical area with pressure applied by biting down until the bleeding stops.
- Take your prescribed pain medication as soon as you begin to feel discomfort. This will usually coincide with the local anesthetic becoming less effective.
- Do not suck on a straw, spit, or smoke.
- Restrict your activities the day of the surgery and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable.
- Place ice packs on the side of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section on swelling for an explanation.
- For mild discomfort, use Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). DO NOT take more than 800MG every 6 hours.
- Vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the affected area following surgery should be avoided. This may initiate bleeding caused by dislodging the blood clot that has formed. Do not rinse your mouth for the first post-operative day or while there is bleeding. After the first day, use a warm salt-water rinse every 4 hours and after meals to flush out particles of food and debris that may be lodged in the area.
- Restrict your diet to liquids and soft foods which are comfortable for you to eat.

Bleeding- A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following a surgical procedure. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Bleeding is best controlled using pressure. Excessive bleeding may be controlled by placing a gauze pads over the area and biting firmly for thirty minutes. Repeat if necessary. If bleeding has not decreased in 3-4 hours, bite on a dampened tea bag placed directly over the surgical site. The tannic acid in the tea helps the blood to clot.

Swelling- The amount of swelling that is normally expected after an extraction depends on the type of surgery. Swelling around the mouth, cheek, eyes, and side of the face is not uncommon. The swelling sometimes may not appear immediately, and it may occur up to 2-3 days post-surgery. You can help to minimize the swelling by applying ice packs to the affected area. For the first 3 hours, apply the ice packs

directly to the area, alternating on for 20 minutes, then off for 20 minutes. Applying ice after 24 hours has no beneficial effect. If swelling or jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm. If the swelling is significant, you may use a moist heat compress to help suppress it.

Numbness- Due to the local anesthetic, there may be numbness in the surgery site that may last 6-8 hours.

IV Site- If medication was given intravenously, you may have some tenderness or bruising around the site of injection. Moist heat (warm, wet cloth) or dry heat (heating pad on low heat) to the area the next day will help to ease any discomfort.

For Women Only- Do not breast feed for 12 hours if you were sedated for surgery. If you are using oral contraceptives, please note that antibiotics and other medication may interfere with their effectiveness. An alternative form of birth control should be used for one complete cycle of birth control pills after the course of antibiotics or other medication is completed.

Dry Socket- A “dry socket” is the loss of the blood clot in the socket. This condition creates a delayed healing at the extraction site and presents symptoms such as pain in the ear, chin, adjacent teeth, and jaw. This discomfort usually begins about the third or fourth day after surgery and can last for many days. The cause of a dry socket is unknown, but it can be attributed to the difficulty of the surgery, increased age, medications (such as birth control pills), and smoking. Treatment is for the symptoms only.

Questions? If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call our office.