

POST OP INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. Sometimes the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of these instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt, follow these guidelines or call our office any time for clarification. Our number is: **540-433-1751 or toll free at 1-888-433-1751.**

DAY OF SURGERY

- **FIRST HOUR:** Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not controlled. The packs may be gently removed after one hour. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30 to 45 minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff for more comfortable positioning. Continue to replace gauze as necessary. When bleeding has stopped you no longer need to use gauze packs.
- **DO NOT SLEEP, EAT, OR DRINK WITH GAUZE IN YOUR MOUTH.**
- **EXERCISE CARE:** Do not disturb the surgical area today, except to place/replace gauze. Do not rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. Do **NOT** suck through a straw, spit or smoke for the first **72 hours**, since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause dry socket.
- **OOZING:** Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. Placing fresh gauze over the areas and biting on the gauze for 30-45 minutes at a time may control bleeding.
- **PERSISTENT BLEEDING:** Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may **substitute a tea bag** (soaked in warm water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) for 20 or 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.
- **SWELLING:** Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. **This should peak about the second or third day.** It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off **during the first 48 hours.** After the first 48 hours, it is usually best to switch from ice to **moist heat to the same areas.** Do not lay flat, prop your head up with an extra pillow so your head is above your heart for the first 24 hours.
- **PAIN:** Unfortunately most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication. If you take the first pain pill before the local anesthetic has worn off, you will be able to manage any discomfort better. Some patients find that stronger pain medicine causes nausea, but if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food, chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals. If you do not achieve adequate relief at first, you may stagger the prescription pain medication with Motrin, Advil, or Ibuprofen. However, you should not drive or operate machinery while taking prescription pain medications.
- **NAUSEA:** Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometimes pain medications are the cause. Preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food and taking the pill with a large volume of water may reduce nausea. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better. Classic Coca Cola may help with nausea.
- **SUTURES:** If you require sutures, they are most likely dissolving sutures. You should expect them to become loose and fall out between 7-10 days after the operation as the extraction site heals. Some of the sutures may fall out sooner. Sometimes sutures are placed between the teeth so please do not disturb them.

- **DIET:** Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. It is advisable to confine the first day's intake to bland liquids, soft or pureed foods (cream soups, puddings, yogurt, milkshakes, ice cream, Popsicles, etc.) Avoid food like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., that may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you can progress to solid foods at your own pace. It is important not to skip meals. If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, regain your strength, have less discomfort and heal fast. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits as much as possible and follow instructions from us or your physician regarding your insulin schedule.
- If you have been given a prescription for antibiotics, take as directed. Be sure and take antibiotics and pain medicine at least **ONE HOUR APART**, as to not upset your stomach.
- **SHARP EDGES:** If you feel something hard or sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls, which once supported the extracted teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office.
- **If you wear a retainer start wearing it the night of your surgery.**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS

- **MOUTH RINSES:** Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use 1/4 teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least 2 to 3 times daily.
- **BRUSHING:** Begin your normal oral hygiene routine the day following surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.
- **WARM APPLICATIONS:** You may apply warm compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (hot water bottle, hot moist towels, heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas after the first 48 hours. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.
- **HEALING:** Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follow: The first three days are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some degree of swelling. After the third and fourth day you will usually be far more comfortable and, although still swollen, you can usually begin a more substantial diet. **The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement.** If dry socket occurs (**loss of the blood clot from the socket, usually on the third to fifth day after surgery**) there is a noticeable, distinct, persistent, throbbing pain in the jaw, often radiating toward the ear and forward along the jaw to cause other teeth to ache. If you do not see steady improvement after the first few days of surgery, don't suffer. Call the office and report your symptoms so you can be seen as soon as possible.
- If you are given a **plastic syringe, DO NOT use it for the first 5 days.** Then use it daily according to the instructions until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket.

*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 where you had your surgery done. A 24-hour answering service is available to contact the doctor on call after hours. Calling during office hours will allow you faster response to your questions or concerns. **540-433-1751. 1-888-433-1751.***