

Post-Operative Instructions: General

The mouth usually requires very little attention after most tooth extractions. The wound fills with blood, which clots and makes the best possible dressing. It may have a gray or yellow appearance, as well as a slight odor, for a day or so following the extraction. This should not be taken for an infection, nor is any particular care required other than an occasional rinsing with a salt solution the day after the procedure. There might be a slight degree of swelling.

COMPLICATED EXTRACTIONS AND OTHER SURGERY

The following instructions should be helpful for your recovery from procedures, such as the removal of impacted teeth, the extraction of broken-down teeth, and any other surgical procedure in the mouth.

1. Do not disturb the wound. Avoid rinsing for the remainder of the day following the surgery to permit the formation of a blood clot. Thereafter, frequent rinsing of the mouth with warm salt water rinse is important, using 1 tsp of table salt to a glass of warm water.
2. Swelling is to be expected. Immediate intermittent application of an ice bag on the face over the affected part will help control or prevent this. Do 20 minutes on/20 minutes off for the rest of the day of surgery. **DO NOT USE ICE AFTER THE FIRST DAY.** Swelling will be greatest 3 days after surgery; it will begin to subside after that point.
3. An effort should be made to keep the muscles of the jaw from becoming stiff by frequently opening and closing the mouth even though this may be somewhat uncomfortable. The use of chewing gum is often beneficial.
4. Have your prescription(s) filled. Take as directed.

HEMORRHAGE

Slight bleeding for a short time after surgery is expected and may continue until the next day. However, if there is more than just oozing, the following procedure should help control it.

1. Take a clean gauze pad or tissue and gently wipe the blood from the mouth and from over the wound.
2. Place another clean, folded gauze pad directly on the bleeding area.
3. Close the teeth tightly over the pad so that there is a contact and pressure against the bleeding area.
4. Maintain constant pressure for 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary.
5. If bleeding persists, take a moistened tea bag and place it directly over the bleeding area. Close the teeth tightly over the tea bag, maintaining direct pressure against the gum tissue.
6. Spitting may cause bleeding by drawing the origin. Avoid this if possible.
7. If none of this is successful, call the office or the emergency number.

DIET

Remove the gauze before eating. Do not skip meals. Begin with a soft diet (applesauce, mashed potatoes, milkshakes, etc.) for 1 week. You can advance to more solid foods as you can tolerate it. Avoid foods that are sticky, chewy, crunchy, hard, spicy, or excessively hot or acidic. Increase fluid intake. **DO NOT** drink through a straw for the first 48 hours, as this can promote bleeding and delay healing.



Post-Operative Instructions: General (Cont.)

HYGIENE

No smoking or vigorous rinsing, gargling, or spitting for 48 hours after surgery, as this can promote bleeding and delayed healing. The day after your surgery, you can begin gently rinsing your mouth out with warm salt water ($\frac{1}{4}$ tsp of salt in an 8 oz glass of warm water). Use a soft toothbrush to maintain proper oral hygiene, but carefully avoid the surgical site(s) for the first few days. Be careful not to disturb the stitches (if any were placed) when cleaning your mouth.

ACTIVITY

Restrict your physical activity for the first 24 hours following your surgery. If you want to lie down, keep your head elevated. If you have had IV sedation, you should not drive a vehicle or operate any machinery for the first 24 hours following surgery.

SUMMARY

Most surgical procedures in the mouth produce various degrees of pain and swelling. In some cases, there may be bruising. None of this is unusual and should not cause alarm. Occasionally, small projections of bone will appear in areas where teeth have been extracted. Generally, they will smooth down in a short time by absorption. If they persist, it is important to return to this office. Do not worry about any stitches we may have used. They will either dissolve on their own within 2 weeks or be removed easily and painlessly.