

Oral Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

How you take care of yourself after surgery is very important to how you heal. A few things are very normal for the first few days after surgery. These include discomfort, swelling, and limited mouth movement. Following the instructions below can help you heal more quickly with less discomfort.

Bleeding

The purpose of your gauze is to place pressure on your surgery site. Bite down and maintain firm pressure on the gauze for 15-20 minutes after your procedure. If you still have some bleeding after 20 minutes, replace the gauze and bite down again for another 20 minutes. Some very mild oozing often occurs for 2-3 days afterwards. If you have difficulty getting bleeding to stop, sit upright and try biting down firmly for 30 minutes with constant pressure. If the bleeding still will not stop, call our office immediately.

Do not spit, suck, use straws, or rinse aggressively for the first 24 hours. Failure to do this can cause bleeding or dry socket.

Rinsing

Do not rinse or spit aggressively in the first 24 hours. If you do rinse/spit you can dislodge your blood clot which leads to increased bleeding or pain. Rinsing with salt water *after* 24 hours can help with clearing food from the socket sites. This can decrease healing time and any bad taste. A small syringe is provided for you in your post-operative bag. Rinse by placing the very tip of the Monoject syringe in the socket site and gently flushing the area with saltwater until no more debris is seen. Continue rinsing once a day for the first week OR until your gums have healed over any holes. (Saltwater recipe: Add 1 tsp of salt to 1 cup of warm water and stir.)

Pain

You will experience some discomfort after your procedure. Usually, pain peaks at 48 hours after the procedure and then begins to decrease. By taking your medication starting the same day as the procedure you can keep your pain at a 4/10 level. Failure to take your medication as prescribed leads to more pain on days 2 and 3. If you declined or were not prescribed medications, a common method for over-the-counter pain medication is alternating the following:

-600mg Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) every 6 hours

-325mg Acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 6 hours

By alternating the two medications every three hours, you can optimize your pain management.

Do not take these medications if you are allergic to them or if you were prescribed other medications. If you develop a rash, allergy, or have difficulty breathing, stop taking the medication immediately and contact our office. Do not drive/operate machinery after taking prescribed narcotic pain medications.

Swelling

Swelling and pain are related. Keeping your swelling down will also decrease your post-operative discomfort. Like pain, swelling also tends to peak 2-3 days after the procedure before slowly decreasing. Try to ice the area as much as possible in the first 48 hours. Place ice on the area for 15 minutes, then remove for 15 minutes and repeat.

Bruising/Discoloration

Bruising on the cheeks, neck, or lower jaw is normal surgery. Bruises can be black, blue, yellow, or green and are more common with fairer the skin. Inside the mouth, healing socket sites can also appear yellow, grey, or white in addition to the normal colors.

Dry Socket

Dry socket is the painful difficulty that is caused when your surgical site doesn't heal correctly. Dry socket will start 4-5 days after your surgery and results in 10/10 pain in the jaws that does not improve with pain medication. It may also feel like an intense headache/pain in the ear or temple. If you are feeling any of these symptoms, please call us ASAP to schedule a follow-up appointment. Following instructions on rinsing and smoking decreases your risk of dry socket.

Infection

Post-operative infection occurs sometimes after surgical procedures. While most infections are managed easily, some can be serious. Please contact us immediately if you have any signs of infection including: pus, increasing pain or swelling 3+ days after the procedure, bad taste, bad smell, fever, difficulty breathing, or difficulty swallowing.

Smoking

Smoking cigarettes delays healing and increases risk of complications. You should not smoke for 3-6 months after implant placement. You should not smoke at least 3 days after tooth extraction. You will have the best results if you also stop smoking 2+ weeks before your procedure.

Diet

There is no hard-and-fast rule for a post-operative diet. While a soft diet (eggs, soup, ice cream) is recommended for the first 24 hours after surgery, the best rule to follow is:

“If it hurts, don't do it.”

Pain is your body's way of telling you that it is not ready for the type of food you're eating. Pay attention and increase your diet slowly as you can tolerate it.

Wisdom Tooth Specific:

Recovering from removal of wisdom teeth, especially ‘impacted’ or ‘buried’ teeth is different from other extractions. If you had impacted wisdom teeth removed you may have:

- Significant swelling of the face/neck
- Difficulty with mouth opening
- Sore throat
- Numbness of tongue, lips, cheek
- Aching of other teeth
- Mild fever (less than 104 degrees)

While all of these symptoms are normal and usually improve on their own, please feel free to contact us at any time to discuss. If any of these symptoms have not begun to improve by day 3 after your surgery, please contact us to schedule a post-operative appointment.

Emergencies:

We work hard to make your experience in our office quick and painless. However, oral surgery is still surgery and carries serious risks that can be life-threatening if not treated appropriately. If you cannot reach us on our emergency line and have any of the following symptoms, please call 911 and/or go to your closest emergency room:

- Fever greater than 104 degrees
- Rapidly increasing swelling of neck/face/ roof of mouth
- Difficulty breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Pain when swallowing
- Elevated tongue or floor of mouth
- Inability to feel the lower border of the jaw

I have read and understand the instructions for the post-operative care for oral surgery.

Patient name (print): _____ Date of Birth: _____

Date: _____

Signature patient/legal representative

Relationship: _____

Legal Representative name (print)
